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The Week

IN spite of all reason and the opposition of both the outgoing and the incoming Presidents, the Senate failed to amend the cruiser bill so as to eliminate the time limit imposed for construction. Passage of the bill was a foregone conclusion, but this desertion of their own leaders by the stalwart Republican Senators is an omen of how little influence a President supposed to be of liberal tendency and to have pacific intentions can exert upon a reactionary party. It was generally contended by those who opposed Mr. Coolidge in this matter that we ought to have steel cruisers rather than paper ones. The next problem, however, is to pay for them. If the Senate is to carry on with its obdurate intention, it will soon find that if we are to have steel instead of paper cruisers, we must furnish the gold as well. The President objected that the budget would not permit the necessary appropriations at this time. What is to be done? Incur a deficit? Raise taxes?

Enlarge the already enormous debt arising from past war, in order to prepare for future ones? Mr. Hoover will be able to accomplish few of the constructive projects which his enthusiastic supporters believe he cherishes, if Congress uses up our revenues to engage in a race of naval armament with Great Britain.

FORMER Secretary Work has no reason to be proud of the "exoneration" he has received from the Senate Public Lands Committee in the matter of the Salt Creek oil contract. The Walsh resolution, criticizing him strongly for his action in the matter, was defeated by a strictly party vote, in which the Republicans had a majority of one, and it seems likely that a partial rewording of the report might have changed the vote of Chairman Nye and caused it to be accepted. The facts in the Salt Creek case speak for themselves. The lease was one made by Secretary Fall to Harry Sinclair, renewable at the end of five years. It was made at about the same time as the Teapot Dome lease, a fact which should have caused Secretary Work, when the matter came before him, to leave no stone unturned in finding out whether it was a proper one and was just to the government in its terms. Yet he treated it as a matter of routine, accepting a perfunctory legal opinion from two of his subordinates that the contract was valid. When the question was referred to the Department of Justice for a decision, that department also treated it as a matter of routine. It was allowed to go into a pigeon-hole and lie there for about six months, perhaps in the hope that it would escape public notice until after the end of the political campaign. Not until the New York World, with commendable enterprise, began printing a series of articles on the Salt Creek lease, did the Department bestir itself, and pronounce the contract invalid. No one supposes that former Secretary Work or Assistant Attorney-General Donovan, who had charge of the case in the Department of Justice, were involved in any sort of corruption; but that they were guilty of extraordinary negligence is written plain on the face of the record, whether the Republican majority in the Senate has the courage to admit it or not.

HERBERT HOOVER'S troubles with the protectionists are beginning early. It is reported by the New York World that Mr. Joseph R. Grundy, President of the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association, who has taken a prominent part in financing many Republican campaigns, including the last one, has moved on Washington with the firm purpose of obtaining, through his influence with Senator Reed Smoot of the Finance Committee, a general upward revision of duties which will amount to an embargo on all manufactured products. How near we are to this status already is not generally recognized, as is pointed out by Professor Jacob Viner in the January number of the Index of the Swedish Handelsbanken. The per-capita imports of the United States stand seventh from the last in a list of twenty leading importing countries; only Italy, Spain, Japan, Brazil, India and China are below us, and these enjoy a much smaller per-capita purchasing power. Whether the World's information is correct or not, nearly all manufacturing interests will demand higher duties, and nothing in the campaign attitude of the new President discouraged them from doing so. Nevertheless, a general and drastic upward revision would provide a seriously disturbing influence to business stability, besides aggravating the farm problem and injuring the economic interests of the many other classes in the nation who cannot be protected. In spite of his campaign compromises, Mr. Hoover cannot be ignorant of the dangers in this direction. Will he try, and will he succeed in trying, to have the extra session confine its attention merely to a few minor revisions? Or will the dam break before protectionism at disastrous flood?

THERE are many amusing incidents in the tariff hearings, but one of the most sardonic is the opposition of the New England industrial interests, always protectionist in theory, to an increase in a certain class of duties. This particular proposal concerns, naturally, the prices of something that they buy rather than something that they sell. Southern cotton-raising interests want to put a duty on jute running as high as 1,200 percent of present rates, for the express purpose of keeping out of the country nearly a billion pounds of it and substituting cotton for bags used in baling and otherwise. Incidentally, this increased use of cotton would raise the price of cotton intended for other purposes. What is the matter with this proposal, Mr. New England mill-owner? Isn't it perfectly good protective practice to encourage home industry at the expense of foreign? Isn't the only means of doing this a tariff which keeps the foreign product out and raises the price of the domestic product? Doesn't the whole country benefit by the increase of purchasing power thus brought to the producers of the domestic product in question? Why this unaccustomed worry about the decreased purchasing power of the consumers of said product? And, furthermore, let us whisper a secret in your ear—the

duty wouldn't benefit the cotton grower permanently, since he has no control over output, and the higher prices would stimulate increased production until the old glutted markets returned. The only permanent effect would be to reduce American productive efficiency by substituting the use of a more costly article for a use which could be supplied by a less costly one. But do not think too far in this direction, or it might undermine the religious orthodoxy of your whole protective religion.

MANY state legislatures are now considering the subject of compulsory liability insurance for automobiles. The chief faults of the prevailing system are: (1) only a minority of motor owners carry insurance, and most of the others are financially unable to pay damages for accidents; (2) one who has been injured can collect nothing if he is judged guilty of the slightest degree of contributory negligence; (3) assessment of responsibility for accidents is uncertain and difficult, and amounts awarded by juries are capriciously determined; (4) settlements are long delayed, particularly if the case goes to law, while the need of the victim is immediate; (5) the courts are clogged with accident cases and cannot attend properly to their other business. Massachusetts compels every automobile owner to insure, but still leaves jurisdiction of cases to the courts. The American Automobile Association urges a law compelling those who have been involved in accidents to furnish proof (by insurance or otherwise) that they are financially liable, before being re-licensed. These are half-way measures which do not reach the heart of the difficulty. The best proposal is to combine compulsory insurance, in a state fund, with an administration of compensation under a commission which would award fixed amounts for certain injuries and would disregard contributory negligence. This is the successful method of administering accident compensation in industry. It assures fairly prompt and just compensation in all cases; it relieves the courts; it would lower the cost of insurance for those already carrying it. The only interests having grounds of opposition to such a measure are the private insurance companies and those motorists who do not now insure, on the hope that they will "get by." Do either of these interests weigh heavily against public necessity?

GROVER WHALEN, New York's new Commissioner of Police, is learning some of the reasons why it is so difficult to relieve traffic congestion. Having operated drastically and on the whole successfully in the theatrical district, he has turned his attention to the Fifth Avenue shopping center, where conditions are about as bad as they were on Broadway. Nearly all traffic authorities agree that among the palliative measures which bring at least temporary relief, the abolition of parking and, under average conditions, of left turns, are among the most important; parking ties up sometimes as much

as 50 percent of the width of a street, and left turns hinder the flow of traffic at the very moment when it ought to proceed most expeditiously. No sooner, however, did Mr. Whalen propose that these remedies be applied in the Fifth Avenue district, than anguished howls of protest arose from the owners of the big department stores. Although only a small proportion of their customers arrive in private automobiles, and although it is obvious that these persons could use taxicabs with little or no inconvenience, the storekeepers are on tenterhooks lest their precious "carriage trade" should be hindered in even the slightest degree. They refuse to learn from the experience of Chicago, where all parking was abolished in the Loop a year ago, and where the stores, at first violent against the ruling, now report increased business and are well satisfied. Mr. Whalen, himself a department-store executive until a few weeks ago, has bowed before the storm; parking will go on, and the whole city will continue to be inconvenienced by having one of its main arteries of travel clogged, in order that a little handful of the rich may continue to display their motors to the world while they buy.

ACCORDING to the press, a representative of an Anglo-American banking group has arrived in Belgrade for the purpose of negotiating a loan of \$250,000,000 with the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Ordinarily no apprehension need be felt in regard to this type of financial transaction, but in this particular case there are important political considerations which banking groups should take into account, and which their respective governments should impress upon them. As an attempt to weld together into a single national unit three ethnic elements, the kingdom so far has not been a success. The Serbs have attempted to fasten upon the Croats and Slovenes a centralized government—a unitary state. The Croats, who until recently were impatiently led by Stefan Radich, have kept alive a separatist spirit, and have demanded some form of federation allowing for racial autonomy. Last June a crisis came when, in the midst of an impassioned attack against the government, Radich was shot by a government member of the Skupshtina, and shortly afterward died. As a result, the Croat deputies withdrew from the Skupshtina, and have since been in opposition to the central authorities. Until the first of this year M. Koroshetz, a Slovene, attempted to head the government of the country; but the ill-will of the Croats was so strong that he finally resigned. A dictatorship has been set up by King Alexander and Parliament has been dissolved.

THE point of this narrative is simply that any loan to the government of Yugoslavia is a loan to a dictatorship. Worse still, it is a loan to a pro-Serb dictatorship, which has little respect for the Croatian separatist demands. The Croats are therefore protesting that any loan would probably be spent

upon the Serbian portions of the kingdom, to the neglect of Croatia, but that the Croats would be obliged to meet the bill. Suppose that a loan of \$250,000,000 is made to King Alexander by an Anglo-American banking group, and that a revolution headed by the Croats later drives him from power: there is strong probability that a subsequent government under Croatian influence would disavow the loan, especially if it had been spent upon the Serbs alone. Obviously, any loan to Yugoslavia under existing conditions has political implications which neither bankers nor governments may legitimately ignore. If Yugoslavia is in need of outside financial aid, this aid should be granted through the agency of the Finance Committee of the League of Nations. This would be desirable, not in order to improve the security of the loan from the standpoint of the investor, but to make sure that the proceeds would be spent on behalf of each of the three ethnic elements in the kingdom.

Where Did the Utilities Get It?

THE NUMEROUS requests which Governor Roosevelt has received for an investigation of public-utility regulation in New York State serve to emphasize the seriousness of a situation which exists, in some form or other, in well-nigh all of the forty-eight states. Holding-company securities are booming; their profits are large and their anticipated profits are still larger. Concentration of control of the operating companies, which has been proceeding so rapidly in recent years, is being accelerated. This is now the chief field in the United States for the big promoters and investment bankers. If development of this sort were taking place in an ordinary commercial and competitive business, we might regard it with comparative indifference, because it is generally assumed that in such industries some competition will persist in spite of mergers, that competition will take care of the consumer, and that if a business makes large profits it can do so only by effectiveness in supplying the consumers' wants. But almost every public utility company holds, by franchise or similar arrangement, a monopoly in its own area. The consumer must pay what it charges or go without. Consequently its rates are regulated in the interest of the public, ordinarily by a state commission. This commission is not compelled by law to allow more profit than would constitute a "fair return" on a "fair value" of the property. If these fair words are not meaningless, and commission regulation is not futile, where do the utilities' enormous profits and the great accretions in the prices of their shares come from?

In New York State the proposed inquiry has a peculiar relevancy because of the proposed development by the state government, in the interest of the people, of new and large sources of water power. This approved policy of Governor Smith's has pre-

sumably been taken over by his successor. But if the public is not to go into the transmitting and distributing business as well, the power must be sold to one or more of these great private aggregations. Will the state connive at increasing their profit by supplying them with still more power without seeing that it reaches the consumer at reasonable rates? If so, the long and hotly waged battle for public ownership and operation of the power plants will have been fought in vain. It is particularly the duty of Governor Roosevelt to check up on the performance of regulation.

No better indication of what he should look into has reached our attention than the open letter to him of the Public Committee on Power. It may therefore be of advantage to summarize, for the benefit of those who have not seen it, the main points of this able document.

In the first place, there is the question of propaganda, supporting the utilities' practices, which is reckoned among the costs of operation and is therefore paid for by the consumer. The investigation by the Federal Trade Commission has already disclosed that utilities have put speakers before 280,000 citizens of the state, have regularly sent copies of a magazine subsidized by them to members of the legislature, have distributed hundreds of thousands of pamphlets in schools and to consumers, and have regularly sent material to newspapers, often printed without information of the source. This investigation does not cover the activities of the companies in New York City, Buffalo and Rochester. Publicity to increase the use of power is one thing; special pleading at the consumers' expense is another. It may in part account for any laxity in safeguarding the consumers' interest.

The next consideration is the relationship between the increase in values of utility stock, which has accompanied the merger movement, the costs of operation of the companies involved, and the prices charged the consumer. Between December 31, 1925, and December 31, 1928, the market value of the common stock of the holding companies, with one exception, has more than doubled—it has gone up 147.1 percent. The stock of the exception (the Mohawk-Hudson) has increased 160.8 percent since 1926. During the same period the cost of coal per ton has fallen more than 6 percent and the amount of coal necessary to produce one kilowatt-hour of current has been reduced 16.2 percent. This alone is a great economy in operation. Yet the rates charged for house consumers have fallen only 6 percent in the state and 2.3 percent outside of Greater New York. It looks as if increases in operating efficiency had been channelled off largely into holding-company profits rather than into rate reductions. These estimates of the Committee should be verified and rounded out by further studies of cost. Mergers are usually sanctioned by the Commission on the basis of the general impression, furthered by vague promises of the company officials, that the public will benefit.

Does the public benefit as much as it should?

The interrelationships of the companies should be investigated, so that it may be known how fully the state will have to deal with a monopoly in the sale of its own power.

The wide spread between rates charged industrial users and domestic users should be examined, and especially the rates charged companies affiliated in any way. It was brought out in recent hearings that the New York Edison charged the Third Avenue Railways 78/100 of a cent per kilowatt-hour and at the same time purchased power from the United Electric Light Power for 98/100 of a cent. Domestic consumers pay almost ten times as much as the railways, or seven cents, while the city pays six cents for street lighting.

A large part of the income of the holding companies comes, not from ownership of the operating companies' stock, but from "service charges"—sometimes on a flat percentage basis of the gross receipts. These charges are part of the costs of the operating company and usually escape regulation. The process is described as follows by the Federal Trade Commission:

Its [the holding company's] banking organization arranges for and participates in the marketing of the company's securities, and collects a fee; its purchasing organization places the orders for supplies and equipment, inspects the purchases, and collects a fee; and its construction organization performs the construction work, and collects a fee; and its consulting managerial organization supervises the management and operation of the new facilities, and collects a fee.

The services may be worth what is charged in all cases, or they may not be. At any rate here is a break in the wall of regulation through which a ten-ton truck full of concealed profits may be driven. This sort of thing is forbidden in the case of railroads by the Clayton Act. It should be thoroughly investigated.

When the companies appeal to the courts from decisions of the Commission, the litigation is costly and almost endless. The New York Telephone case is now in its ninth year and may go two more. Its total cost (the consumers pay for both sides of the argument) is probably not less than \$6,000,000. The New York Edison case is entering its fifth year and has cost not less than \$4,300,000.

If the courts decide, as they frequently do, that upward revaluations of the property largely on the basis of the present cost of reproducing it are proper, rates must be correspondingly higher to pay the "fair return" on the "fair value." But the bondholders, who paid a large part of the original cost of construction, get none of the fruits of such an increase, since their rate of interest is fixed. The fruit all piles up for the common stockholders. In case a 20 percent boost in the rate of the Rochester Gas and Electric Company were allowed, for instance, the stockholders' return would rise almost 48 percent. And, of course, holding companies own

stock, not bonds. Increases in valuation, accompanied by decreases in costs of operation, undoubtedly account for a large part of the rich pickings of the holding companies.

What is to be done about such matters will appear more clearly after an investigation. Among the suggestions of the Committee on Power is the important one that no profit be allowed the holding companies or other affiliated non-utility concerns on transactions with operating companies. Another is that, in hearings before the Commission, a People's Counsel, independently appointed by the Governor, represent the consumers, who now are frequently not represented at all. The Committee further calls attention to the proposal of the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities to obviate valuation difficulties—that each company be compelled to negotiate a contract with the state, fixing a valuation approximately at the amount actually paid in by investors, and agreeing in the future to accept the Commission's regulation without appeal to the courts, provided such regulation does not prevent the payment of sufficient dividends to keep the stock at par value.

No more important matter faces the new Governor of New York than to work toward a satisfactory system of regulation. It is a matter of national interest, in which intelligent and forceful leadership is sorely needed.

Einstein and the Press

THE new Einstein theory has resulted in an extraordinary journalistic hullabaloo. The American press, and the leading New York journals in particular, from the moment that his new publication was announced, have squandered columns of space upon it in an amazing fashion. Dozens of mathematicians and physicists have been induced to write signed articles about its significance, each article more obscure than the last. When the document itself was finally made public, the New York Herald Tribune had the whole thing cabled from Berlin, a feat which involved great expense and long labor by two groups of men, one at either end of the cable. The New York Evening Post attempted to transmit the text by telephotography, and heroically printed a facsimile of part of the result, even though it was largely illegible. Other papers were similarly enterprising. The press associations combed Germany for scholars, preferably Americans, who could comment off-hand on the new theory, and their views were cabled and published, adding to the confusion already caused by the preliminary speculations of their brethren.

Just how much of all this vast expenditure of time and trouble was worth while? Einstein himself has estimated that there are perhaps twelve men in the world who can understand his new theory, without specifying how many of the twelve live in America. His estimate may be somewhat too nar-

row, but quadruple it and you still have a limited audience. It would be interesting to know how many subscribers to the New York Herald Tribune, for example, can even read the mathematical symbols which were so conscientiously reproduced by that periodical. They are probably few. Thus we have the spectacle of newspapers spending thousands of dollars to print something which the editors themselves must be well aware can be read by only an insignificant minority of their subscribers, and understood by one even smaller. All this enterprise, moreover, would have been rendered useless if performed a week later; by that time, presumably, every real student of Einstein would have received a copy of the new pamphlet by mail. The question remains, then, why did the papers do it?

Perhaps the first answer is that journalism has developed an inferiority complex in regard to scientific news, and is "over-compensating" for it. Publishers have been scolded for many years by such critics as Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn for not giving adequate attention to science, and to news of educational value in general. These reproaches are still valid as far as most papers are concerned, and especially those in the smaller cities; but they no longer hold as regards the leading dailies of the great cities. Stung into action, the publishers are now zealous in reporting advances in the physical sciences. The New York Times, preëminent in this field, prints such long articles on the meetings of the learned societies, and on important news from the research laboratories, that probably few of its readers can spare them the time they deserve. Science Service, a syndicate created for the purpose of providing correct scientific news to the daily press, sends a formidable weekly budget of well written articles to a long list of clients. Popularizers of science for the magazines and for Sunday newspapers find their services in greater demand than ever before. On the whole, it is true, this new growth in the columns of the press does better by the physical sciences than by the social. Economics, sociology and even psychology are still likely to be somewhat scamped, partly because these subjects are more "controversial," partly, no doubt, because the editors feel they know something of these fields themselves, and therefore discount the work of experts as they do not in fields of which they have no knowledge whatever.

In part, again, the reporting of the Einstein theory was mere journalistic bounce and (as John Galsworthy might say) zingo. Like the saluting by the bell-hop in a smart hotel, it was a needless and useless bit of swank, intended to show that the editors are on their toes. "Today's offering," they said in effect, "is a document containing (so we hear) one of the great discoveries of all time. We can't understand it, and neither can you, but since we undertake to print all the news, without guaranteeing that it will be intelligible, here it is." Such journalistic super-service is typically American, just as our newspapers are much the most voluminous

in the world. So far as can be learned, neither the British nor the Continental press has paid a tenth as much attention as have the Americans to "the Einstein story." Those English dailies which we have examined have printed only such facts as an average intelligent person grasp, have printed them once and let it go at that.

By American standards, there is no doubt that the editors were right, and that the publication was good business. Their readers probably enjoyed the subtle compliment of the assumption that they might be able to comprehend these complicated formulæ; they wanted, from plain curiosity, to see what the stuff looked like. While they know very well that there is an aristocracy of intellect, probably they like to pretend, even with an ostentatious self-deprecation, that there is none, that one man's brain is as good as another's. "The Einstein dope?" they might say, "no, I haven't read it yet. But I clipped it out."

Our Heroes

IT IS a pleasant comment on modern life that there still seems to be about as much heroism as is needed. Soft living—if it is soft—has not killed the robust qualities which were common in more primitive ages. In war and in peace most men are willing enough, when occasion arises, to be killed or risk being killed. But somehow the fact causes universal astonishment when attention is dramatically drawn to it. Captain Fried and Chief Officer Manning of the "America" steam through a gale to the rescue of the crew of the sinking "Florida," rescue them most efficiently, and immediately find themselves for a brief period international figures. Upon reaching their home port, which happens to be New York, they are welcomed by the mayor, given a parade and invited to a banquet. Mrs. Fried, in the humble four-room apartment on upper Broadway which is all that a sea captain can afford, worries for fear the fuss made over her husband will be bad for his health, but there is nothing much that she can do about it. Soon we find that he has endorsed a cigarette, presently he is despatched to Washington to receive the personal blessings of Mr. Coolidge, and only a wise afterthought prevents some inspired idiot from inducing him to make a tour of the country, like a performing bear. All this is probably dreadfully annoying to a seafaring man who has merely done what he considered his plain duty, and who may also have a sense of humor. But it requires far sterner fiber to refuse to be made a hero than it does actually to be one. The public has ways of punishing people who will not play the roles assigned to them.

No one wants in the least to detract from a brave act. But there are two comments to be made about most of the brave acts that make the front pages of the metropolitan newspapers. One is that they are

selected capriciously. The public attention, as made tangible by the newspapers and the radio, is like a huge spotlight with a small but intensely bright focus, swung about at random. The "America's" captain and crew got the credit that was due them, partly because they did their excellent job on a dull day. If there had been big news of another sort on the same day, they might never have emerged from the obscurity of the bottom of page three, column five. Then, too, they were helped by the fact that the public prefers certain definite kinds of heroism. It loves rescues at sea. It is much less excited by equally brave rescues performed by firemen or policemen in line of duty, or miscellaneous rescues by ordinary citizens. The second comment, arising out of the first, is that the public likes heroism in real life for the same reason that it likes it in motion pictures. It loves to project itself into the places of the principal actors. The public thinks it would like to give up the grocery business or school teaching and go to sea. Captain Fried and Chief Officer Manning afford it the keen pleasure of imagining how it would itself have acted if it had been in command of a ship or a lifeboat. We imagine that the wildest enthusiasm for the "America's" exploit was to be found among the followers of sedentary occupations. The steel workers and air-mail flyers probably took it calmly. It is not accident that New York's favorite method of welcoming returning heroes is to shower them with ticker-tape. A man whose life is wound up in ticker-tape has to have an outlet.

The ironical feature of the whole proceeding is the public's calm confidence that in making heroes of men who have performed heroic deeds it is conferring a favor upon them. But in reality the job of being a hero before 120,000,000 Americans must be as trying as any in the world—about as trying as being a whale-sized goldfish swimming in a bowl as big as Madison Square Garden with all the spotlights in New York focused upon it. This is a risk that might blanch the cheeks of the most fearless mariner. It is one of the penalties of living dangerously in this strange, inventive, sophisticated, child-like time.

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So This Is Farm Relief!

The Sorry Record of the Farm Loan System

WHEN Mr. H. G. Wells burgeoned forth with spring, in the Saturday Evening Post, expounding the question "Has the Money Credit System a Mind?", he described "the banking financial community" as having control without responsibility, and observed that "it displays but slight awareness of what as a constituent organ of society it is up to. It is just working uncritically, like a born cart-horse in a cart."

An extraordinarily interesting test of this question exists in that colossal centralized credit community of ours known as the Federal Farm Loan system. Now twelve years old, it boasts nineteen hundred millions of assets, and the achievement of having lowered farm-mortgage interest rates by about 2 percent. Political optimists like President Coolidge, blandly content with vast size and extensive service, ignore—at least, publicly—this system's incidental, but important, powers of social control, the beneficial uses of which require masterly application of mind.

Economists point out that, even with rates lowered 2 percent, farmers are paying too much for necessary financing. Our rates are higher than those available in twenty other leading countries. Our farm industry earns only about 4 percent on its investment. It cannot afford to pay 5 to 6 percent for mortgage loans, nor for marketing loans, to say nothing of the customary 10 percent for financing crop production where such credit is obtainable. Why, the farm organizations demand, with the world's largest rural credit system, offering tax-exempt bonds denominated as government instrumentalities, should farmers of the United States pay more for funds than farmers in other lands pay for loans from smaller systems?

That administration of our rural credit has not resulted in low enough interest rates is merely a first point made by critics. They complain that major social powers, carefully prepared for in drawing the Farm Loan Act, have been abused or perverted. One of these powers looks to the prevention of unnecessary deflation of the farmers' permanent investment, his land. That section of our three-part system for farm-loan relief, the Federal Land Banks, controls about 10 percent of the total farm-mortgage business of the country. The twelve regional Federal Land Banks are under government control. Nation-wide in their activities, they possess regulatory powers which extend to the authority to sustain farm-land values to an important degree.

The acid test of whether this credit-community

has a mind involves this point. Encouraged by high prices and the boom-methods of farm realtors, some—by no means all—of our farmers bought too much acreage at inflated post-war prices. With the failure of farm income, deflation occurred, followed by a land crisis. Bankruptcies and foreclosures were widespread and inevitable, and the tragic procession of defeated farm families began to move citywards, seeking livelihood in other occupations than those to which they had been trained. By 1924, it was a migration; then a rout. Today we know that we suffered a net loss in farm population of four millions, and still land panic is with us. Farms are still being foreclosed in numbers by mortgagers, and land prices are strikingly subnormal. The question is, did the Farm Loan system display the disposition and the intelligence to use its wide powers to sustain land values as much as possible?

Concrete acts allow ground for belief that the system exerted its powers, perhaps blindly, to the positive detriment of agriculture, for whose relief it was designed. For, somewhat casually, when deflation of farm prices was well under way, the Federal Farm Loan Board initiated a drastic policy, the significance of which—since nominally it had to do with accounting—remained obscure for several years. Presidents of the Federal Land Banks were advised that "acquired real estate"—foreclosed farms—must be completely charged off the books immediately after taking. Since Land Banks have no assets save lands, this ruling was tantamount to inflicting a rate of 100 percent depreciation upon the business. Thereafter, for more than five years, all farms foreclosed were not listed in any value whatever as assets. The true asset value of these farms was thus concealed.

The effect of this ruling was calamitous. Like all other agencies lending on land, the Federal Banks had to carry an overburden of real estate, although they were not, in most instances, so badly off as state or certain national banks; or many insurance and mortgage concerns.

An identical problem faced all alike: how to carry the land until it could be profitably sold. "Hold" was the watchword. Experts advised a private insurance company with heavy mortgage investments that to sell 5,000 acres in parcels scattered throughout Iowa at forced sale would depress farm-land prices throughout the state \$25 per acre.

Commercial banks, having demand obligations, were soon compelled to sell. Land Banks, however,

were in a favored position. Accepting no deposits, free from demand obligations, they were also fortified by the provision in the Farm Loan Act designed to meet just such a crisis, and to allow for the cycle of industrial ups and downs: the Land Banks are empowered to hold land five years if necessary, and no fixed rate of depreciation is set. Generally speaking, the Federal Land Banks were in a good position to hold, since appraisals for the most part had been conservative. Testimony given in congressional hearings states that in Iowa, for example, \$100 per acre was arbitrarily fixed as the top value that would ever be accepted as a lending basis. The Federal Land Bank loaned closer to 35 percent than the legal 50 percent of the accepted valuation.

The policy of complete, immediate depreciation of all assets, however, changed the complexion of the situation, since it deeply affected the balance sheets of many of the Federal Land Banks. To make a reasonably good showing, the Land Banks of various districts had to sell. There were few buyers at any price. As tight-pressed commercial banks attempted to liquefy assets nearly all at once, a glut of land accumulated. When, regardless of market conditions, certain Land Banks joined the stampede and dumped land—sometimes wholesale—on a market which was already bad, prices dropped plummet-wise.

The St. Paul Federal Land Bank sent to the auction block, in a single batch, parcels of land worth one million; the cash price received was \$375,000. The transaction brought a large direct loss to the bank, but its indirect losses were worse. By depressing values the security behind every *good* loan was reduced, not only for this bank but for all mortgage agencies. And the human loss! Farmers in no visible way related to the Federal Land Bank saw their equities in their farms diminish, and, in some cases, vanish. Such a process inevitably increased the migration which it was the obvious duty of the system to exert itself to check.

In the great Spokane Land Bank, a serious situation was reached by 1924. Federal Land Banks have interlocking liability; all are responsible for the losses in any. Spokane's overburden of foreclosed lands (and unpaid taxes) alarmed the Federal Board and the other eleven banks. The condition set up by law for receivership of any bank is default of interest on its bonds. This was not reached at Spokane; nevertheless, a receivership, camouflaged under the name of the Spokane Commission, was set up. Today Spokane stockholders complain that their bank never actually required any such treatment; that, had they been allowed to count their real assets at book value (farms appraised at ten millions which the bank had foreclosed), they would have worked out their problem. They complain that a large land-sales department, employing forty people and extra officials, exerts a costly and dual control over the bank's affairs, which Spokane

is required to stand because the other eleven banks furnished, up to 1928, some \$2,800,000 to help Spokane out.

We lack sufficient information to test the justice of these contentions. A covering darkness has been maintained for some years over the actual contract between Spokane and the other eleven banks, about the amount of land sold, whether wholesale or retail, as well as about the prices received and the names of the purchasers. The apparent secrecy has its excuse in the probable effect on the bond market. If farmers of other districts had known that three millions of funds otherwise available for dividends to themselves were diverted to the Northwest necessarily or unnecessarily, stockholders as well as bondholders might have exerted themselves in an effort to find out whether the situation was caused and prolonged by stupidity or by design. After the fact, the information did less harm; yet it would appear that a flood of light should still be let in.

For the financial aid given Spokane taxed the resources of other banks, and the continuance of the charge-off policy even more so. Today the Columbia, S. C., bank is said to face a more serious situation than any other. Six out of twelve of the Federals, by 1927, showed their embarrassment by cutting their dividends; four reduced, two paid none whatever. Why these facts were omitted from the 1927 annual report of the Farm Loan Board to Congress is a question of interest. For two years those annual reports of the Farm Loan Board have been oddly delayed. The 1926 report was withheld until Congress had adjourned. Finally submitted as of a May date in 1927, it was not printed for general distribution until the very last of that year. The 1927 report, due in the first quarter of 1928, was held up until the Senate finally passed a special resolution demanding it; its appearance was made on the eve of the adjournment of Congress in May. Astonishingly, that report included tables for a whole quarter of the year 1928.

Statements from this Board before now have puzzled even wise members of the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, usually because they were brief, consolidated, unelucidated. But why should the Board have been moved to the unprecedented presentation of figures for fifteen instead of twelve months? Explanation lies in the fact that in February, 1928, the 100 percent depreciation policy on foreclosed farms was at last abandoned. The book value of many million dollars' worth of farms distinctly improved the appearance of the March statements over those of December. Revoking the policy was proper; inclusion of three months of 1928 decidedly improper. Such practices in a presidential campaign year invite damaging comment upon the Board, headed by Eugene Meyer, entrusted with the supervision of two-billion-dollar institutions, and required promptly to present unconfused facts for one year at a time to Congress

and to stockholders. Query: Was the action the result merely of inadvertence?

Was the depreciation policy which, according to qualified analysts, unnecessarily embarrassed the farmers' banks, and increased instead of checking deflation, perpetrated through mere inability to use machinery properly?

Perhaps the Federal Farm Loan Board and the political appointees who officer the Federal Land Banks simply muddled along. Certainly the alternative is not agreeable to consider. It would imply a prolonged hostility toward the farmers' own non-profit banks. It might entail indictments of successive Farm Loan Boards, of Mr. Mellon, ex-officio chairman, and of the administration. Nevertheless, the sequence of Farm Loan activities is so interpreted in certain quarters. Evidence offered in connection with the long-suppressed Joint Stock Land Bank scandals is pertinent to this theory. In 1926 the privately owned and parallel system of Joint Stock banks, competing with Federals, found themselves confronted by a similar, but far less stringent, ruling of the Federal Board, requiring a charge-off of 20 percent annually on acquired real estate, and setting aside an extra reserve. The majority fought like wild elephants. They uttered strong charges concerning old-line mortgage interests using Treasury influence to wreck the Farm Loan system. They declared that this depreciation policy, not half so exacting as that which had long been in force in the Federals, would actually ruin the Joint Stocks, which had a much lighter burden of acquired land.

So effectively did the Joint Stocks protest the right of the Federal Board or the Treasury to interfere with fiscal policy (the clear prerogative of their own boards of directors), that ultimately the rules which had been formally adopted were revoked, with the approval of Mr. Mellon, without ever having been put into force.

Now if the Joint Stocks' contention that such a policy would ruin their banks is correct, it would appear that for years before and a year after the Federal Board let this branch of the system off, it consistently maintained that policy to the prejudice and actual damage of the farmers' Federal Land Banks. Why the discrimination between the two systems? Since early in the game, the private, profit-making Joint Stocks have been favored. When Congress, in its alleged wisdom, set up two parallel systems of banks to do the same work, the least that could have been expected of the supervisor, the Federal Farm Loan Board, was impartiality. Yet it appears that the farmers' own branch, for whose stock farmer-stockholders have paid in sixty-one millions of hard-earned, crop-made dollars, has suffered a weighty, unseen handicap. These stockholders have never been permitted to control the boards of their own banks—and thereto appends a tale of political chicanery almost without parallel! They have been kept virtually unable

even to find out what was actually being done to them. So this is farm relief!

Not unnaturally, the favored Joint Stocks have been able in recent years to outloan the Federals. Not unnaturally, six of the farmers' banks are less prosperous than they might be expected to be by virtue of the three billions of good lands pooled by their members, the tax exemption their bonds enjoy, and the sublime trust farmers somewhat blindly place in their government. What is remarkable is that, despite losses, because of its vast resources and the faith which has to date bred new business, the Farm Loan system is still financially sound.

To make it sound in all other ways is imperative. Dangerous tendencies must be checked, and legislative and administrative adjustments made. Before passing new farm-aid legislation, this Congress might well adopt means to achieve the full purposes of that hopeful Congress of 1916, which fathered the Farm Loan Act. Those who advocate social control of banking and credit should concern themselves with fool-proofing the Farm Loan credit community, and supplying it with necessary gray-matter to allow its development in the superlatively important field of coöperative credit, on lines which do provide low interest, assure self-help of which politicians cannot make ducks and drakes, and prevent dangerous absent-mindedness in regard to genuine information and major policies.

GERTRUDE MATHEWS SHELBY.

(This is the first of three articles by Mrs. Shelby discussing the weaknesses of the Federal Farm Loan system. The second will appear next week.)

Sierra Dry Farm

The ground is dragged, stone-choking piled
Dead nettle and wild mustard tear,
Thistle and chaff to dust are filed,
Glint of dry ruins in white air.

Clutched on dark steel, dirt-harrowed grass
Smokes at the root, from crevice torn;
Stamp of the hoof, leaf-print of brass,
The bruise in iron trace is worn.

Tarnish in milkweed, blast of fern,
Teeth scrape the wisp and bitter straw;
Raw flanks beneath wet leather burn,
Or plunge against clod-bastioned law.

Crumble of weed, powder of moth,
Haze knits behind the lathered team,
But clashing in bronze field aloft,
Gnats brave the rust and shadowed beam

LINCOLN FITZELL

The Theater: A Depressed Industry

THE legitimate theater of Broadway recovered from its usual New Year's Eve riot of high prices and crowded houses to face a prospect that was dismal, to say the least. It counted almost one dark theater in every five. Its ears noted the persistent rumble of transfer trucks carting away the remains of unsuccessful plays. According to *Variety*, there were twenty closings during the first two weeks of 1929, and nearly all of these were failures.

We are about half through what is admittedly the worst season that Broadway has seen in a decade—perhaps for all time. Fundamental conditions are not so different from what they have been for the past several years, but an unusually poor crop of plays has accentuated the difficulties under which the theater labors. If next season should see a richer crop, the situation would again take on a more cheerful aspect, and many of the difficulties which now seem so momentous would become inconsequential. We cannot, however, depend upon this. Furthermore, the economic trend within the theater is such that the obstacles militating against a financially successful production seem to be increasing for any given script. The theater can no longer afford to drift aimlessly, but must make a conscious effort to control its course.

The causes to which the present state of the theater business is most generally attributed—beyond the lack of enough good plays—are high costs, a bad system of ticket distribution, an over-supply of theaters, the decline of road business, and the competition of other amusements. All are significant, but the first two are the most pressing, and only these will be discussed here.

In common with other price series, theater costs have risen appreciably since before the World War. Because of the paucity of available data and the absence of a suitable unit of measurement, the rise cannot be precisely computed. Men in the business will tell you that costs have doubled, perhaps tripled. From an examination of a large number of basic figures, I conclude that these estimates are probably not so far from the mark, though I should set the upper limit of the advance at 150 rather than at 200 percent. There is a great disparity among the items. Thus, while actors' salaries have, on the whole, not gone up more than 50 to 75 percent, the hourly wages of truck drivers have advanced about 500 percent.

This does not, however, tell the whole story. Standards as well as unit prices have risen. Plays are put on in much more lavish fashion today than fifteen years ago, thus intensifying the effect of a rising price level.

There are three factors which determine the cost of any play. One is the basic requirement of the script—the number and type of sets, costumes, properties, and so on. The second is the manager's standard of production. The third is the degree of efficiency with which he operates. Waste and inefficiency are conspicuous in the theater business. Any number of instances could be cited of scenery ordered and never used, of improperly planned work resulting in costly overtime that could have been avoided, of careless buying that would not be tolerated in any well run enterprise, and of many other lapses from competent business technique. In fixing the blame for high costs, producers are silent on these scores.

To counteract the effect of high prices, managers ought to simplify productions, and make an effort, at least, toward ordinary business efficiency. But there is a tendency toward elaboration which often involves a producer in large outlays without compensating returns in box-office receipts or artistic effects. This is due to competitive display and an attempt to emulate the realism of the motion picture. Combined with this is the utter waste that has been pointed out, the elimination of an appreciable proportion of which would result in valuable economies.

But instead of turning to these two factors, producers confine themselves to trying to trim down the first. The production of one-set plays with small casts is finding ever more favor. While this offers the easiest avenue of relief, it is obviously deleterious to the art of the theater, and it does not meet the issues.

Much blame for unnecessarily high costs is laid at the door of the stage hands and other theatrical labor. The complaint is not so much over the basic wage scales as over the working rules regulating hours of labor, overtime, and the required complement of men.

The evaluation of working rules is always a delicate and complex assay. A thorough study of the problem in the case of stage hands would require a lengthy analysis. It may be said, however, that while there are perhaps some abuses in the stage hands' code of practices, there are many rules against which producers and theater operators cry out which are justifiable on broad social grounds and which, furthermore, are necessary protective measures against possible counter-abuses.

In any event, there is the fact that in most productions stage hands' compensation constitutes a relatively unimportant cost item. In respect to production costs—the expenses incurred up to the opening night—stage hands' wages averaged only 12 percent of the total, for seven plays, put on during

the 1927-28 season, whose budgets I saw. On the other hand, the purchase of equipment accounted for more than 70 percent. The sample, though a random selection, is too small to warrant a firm conclusion. At the same time, we may attach some significance to it until it is refuted by more comprehensive figures.

In respect to operating costs—the weekly budget to keep the show going after it has opened—stage hands' salaries for twelve plays averaged less than 4 percent.

No discussion of costs can disregard the influence of real estate. The theater building exacts a high toll for its use. Between 35 and 40 percent of the gross income from the sale of tickets (at box-office prices) goes to rental. If a producer rents a house outright, it costs him between \$60,000 and \$120,000 a year, or between \$1,500 and \$3,000 a week on the basis of a forty-week season. In addition he may be required to meet taxes, insurance and repairs. Due to the uncertain life of a production, few managers care to gamble on an outright lease even if they have the necessary resources. They therefore go into a house on sharing terms, that is to say, on a contract providing for a division of gross receipts and of certain expenses, such as advertising and stage hands' and musicians' salaries. This increases the rental charge in the event of a successful production, but limits the loss in the event of a failure.

Some saving in rental might be effected if future playhouses were constructed on cheaper land outside the present theatrical district. This would, however, be a dangerous expedient, for it might result in a serious loss of patronage as against a slight saving.

The only way to reduce the rental item appreciably is for the producer to control his own theater either through ownership or long-term lease; in other words, to revert to the system which existed prior to about 1870 whereby the operation of a theater building and the production of plays were generally dual functions of a single enterprise. This would not, however, necessitate the installation of a stock company, though it would require a permanent producing organization with a yearly production schedule of several plays and at least the nucleus of a permanent acting company. This, obviously, is just what the Theater Guild has done, to its decided economic as well as artistic profit.

Such a program is not open to every producer, but even if it were, I would not urge its universal adoption, for this would mean that every playhouse would be taken out of the market, leaving none for the young producer who must find a free-lance stage upon which to present his wares. But to individual producers here and there, control of theaters would decidedly lower costs and would, moreover, free them from the domination of real-estate interests, which under some conditions become very exacting.

Turn from the subject of costs to that of distribution:

Theater tickets are for sale at box-offices, at advance-price agencies and at Mr. Leblang's bargain basement. A visit to a box-office is, in the first place, an inconvenient pilgrimage for most theatergoers. In the second place, it offers little hope for a good seat for any popular show. In the third place, it means paying about twice Mr. Leblang's charges for anything short of the real successes (mostly musical productions).

As a result, the box-office is the last place to which most people go for their tickets. No accurate figures are available, but it is estimated that not over 30 percent of all tickets are sold through box-offices. There are flops which draw virtually their entire patronage from the cut-rates. There are hits which sell 80 percent of their orchestra seats and most of their desirable balcony seats through speculators.

If you go to an advance-price agency, you pay from 79 cents to \$5 or more above the established price, which for most people means a corresponding reduction in the number of attendances. If you go to the cut-rate office in the Fitzgerald Building, you can save money, but you are deprived of the best shows, and you seldom can make advance purchases.

Whether the sale of tickets below the established price helps the theater business, or harms it, is hard to say. A ticket for a specified performance is a highly perishable article, and its disposal at any price is better than its non-sale. On the other hand, the existence of a cut-rate market discourages box-office sales at full price.

There is no doubt about the effect of the advance-price agencies. To some extent they stimulate theater-going by the services they offer, but to a much larger extent they retard it, by arrogating to themselves, as middlemen, a vast sum of money which might otherwise go largely to increased sales. There is an agency trade which is not deterred by high prices, but it is relatively small even in these days of bull markets. Inevitably the volume of sales must be adversely affected by the premiums charged by agencies.

Theatrical managers are to blame for the existence of ticket speculation in its present form and magnitude. The trade is not plied surreptitiously but is consequent upon open business transactions between managers and agencies. A certain number of tickets reach the agencies through underground channels, but these form a relatively small percentage of the total.

To me it seems clearly short-sighted policy for the managers to tolerate the present system, in spite of the fact that they derive certain immediate benefits from it at times. While they could not eliminate speculation entirely, they could limit and control it. They could limit the percentage of tickets that they themselves allot to agencies, they could block off most of the flow through underground channels, and they could control resale prices by licensing the agencies under contracts fixing the maximum pre-

miums. They could enforce compliance with the contract by revoking the license of, and withholding tickets from, any agency which violated its stipulations. This would be an entirely feasible and lawful procedure. It would require only joint action on the part of theater managers who are at present in the grip of the agencies; singly, or even in a partial group, they could not stand out against them.

The seats not allotted to agencies should be sold, for all theaters jointly, through a central ticket office with numerous branches throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, and in several suburban centers—a system analogous to the Consolidated Ticket Offices of the railroads. At these central and branch offices tickets should be offered at the established price, the cost of the service being met *pro rata* by the theaters enjoying the benefits.

This is not a new suggestion. It has been put forward on several occasions in the past. It has always failed to materialize, largely because there has never been an effective organization in the managerial ranks, without which no system could be worked out, and partly because of the fear of certain managers that a plan of joint distribution would not be impartially administered.

If the legitimate theater business continues for any length of time in its present depressed state, theatrical managers and others dependent upon it

will have to face the fundamental problems of reducing costs, on the one hand, and of increasing sales, on the other. The former cannot be accomplished by a drive against the theatrical unions. Even if successful, which is highly doubtful, it would not yield sufficient results. What is needed is a retreat from unnecessary over-elaboration, the installation of efficient business methods, and the elimination of waste. The latter calls for the control of ticket speculation and the establishment of a central consolidated ticket office with branches.

Basic to any reform is thorough organization. Such organization now exists among almost all occupational groups in the theater except theater managers and producers. Linking up the different groups there must be a super-organization, functioning under the direction of a full-time executive who is not financially interested in the theater business or involved in its internal politics. The recently revived American Theater Board is an approach to such a super-organization. What it can accomplish remains to be seen. It has obvious defects. It is restricted to three groups—producers, dramatists, and actors. It is attempting to work through cumbersome committees. It lacks a single directing head with executive powers. But it will serve a useful purpose even if it only calls attention to the problems which the theater faces and stimulates discussion of them.

ALFRED L. BERNHEIM.

Cigarettes vs. Candy

War Correspondence from a New Battle Front

FOR SOME time past, our economic seers have had a great deal to say about the "newer competition." Once all the carpet-tack manufacturers considered each other deadly enemies. All of their best efforts were directed toward ruining each other financially and driving each other out of business.

"Mr. A.'s carpet tacks are too dull to be worth anything," Mr. B. would declare.

"Yes," Mr. A. would reply, "but at least the heads stay on. That's more than Mr. B. can say of *his* carpet tacks."

And at that point, when Messrs. A. and B. were hurling furious invective at each other, Mr. C. would leap forward with the declaration that *his* carpet tacks were both sharp and strong—combining the advantages of both the others. Then poor Messrs. A. and B. would go into bankruptcy. Mr. C., you understand, had what is called "business vision," and the others didn't.

Alas, that day of *laissez faire* is gone. Everybody has business vision. Nowadays all carpet-tack

manufacturers are brethren. They meet annually in convention, drink from a common bowl, swear eternal fidelity each to the other, and emerge from the hotel dining-room crying in unison that all carpet tacks are good.

The reason for this development, as the economic seers never tire of pointing out, is very simple. Competition, thanks largely to advertising, is no longer within an industry. Competition—the "newer competition"—is now a fight *between* industries. The carpet-tack industry grapples with the oriental rug industry, because nobody who uses oriental rugs needs carpet tacks. The oriental rug interests ally themselves with their old-time enemy, the domestic rug makers, to attack the Brussels carpet people. Whereupon Brussels carpets appeal for help to carpet tacks, which in turn persuade linoleum to fall into line. And, if need be, all of these join to jump on the furniture business, in an effort to divert to themselves some of the money which would ordinarily be spent on davenports, beds and

chairs. Competition becomes a sort of pitched battle between industries, with the bleeding pocket-book of the general public as the prize of war.

The most recent of these pitched battles, and certainly the most interesting, is that now being waged between the candy industry and the American Tobacco Company, on behalf of Lucky Strikes. It all started quite innocently. The Lucky people feared, perhaps, that the slogan "It's toasted" was losing its power of appeal. And they witnessed the eclipse of their second slogan, "No throat irritation—no cough," by the Old Gold slogan, "Not a cough in a carload." At any rate, they searched for and found another: "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet."

It was a swell slogan, as slogans go. It was easy to say. It tempted the great sweet-eating American public to think of cigarettes every time it opened its mouth. And it could be elaborated upon and supported by all sorts of pseudo-scientific and frightfully convincing arguments in its favor.

So an alluring series of ads was prepared, to point out how much healthier it was to smoke Lucky Strikes than to eat what were, in British fashion, called "sweets." Helen Hayes gave it as her theory, in one ad, that the use of Luckies instead of "sweets" accounts for the trim figure of the modern female. Musical comedy stars contributed their direct evidence to the support of this theory. Rosalie Adele Nelson, the original Lucky poster girl, announced that she considered herself indeed a "Lucky Girl" to have found this new and pleasant way to all-round health.

This sort of thing, of course, annoyed the candy makers excessively; for by "sweets" they understood the Lucky people to mean candy. In the old days they would have been helpless before so cruel an attack. Not so, however, in the era of the "newer competition." The machinery was waiting, ready to start. As soon as the Lucky Strike campaign had hit its stride, the National Confectioners' Association forwarded a diplomatic note of protest to the American Tobacco Company. The tobacco company, in true diplomatic fashion, replied evasively, saying that no attack was intended against the candy trade.

This made the candy people furious. Letters poured in. According to *Printers' Ink*, the organ of the advertising business, a sort of guerrilla warfare began. One candy manufacturer hired space over a radio and started to say mean things about cigarettes and their effect on the human constitution. A chain of New York candy stores inserted the following paragraph in its advertising:

Do not let anyone tell you that a cigarette can take the place of a piece of candy. The cigarette will inflame your tonsils, poison with nicotine every organ of your body, and dry up your blood—nails in your coffin.

The desultory sniping of the candy manufacturers began to develop volume, and the American Tobacco Company started to hedge a little. It inserted the word "fattening" before the word "sweets" in its advertising copy, in an attempt to assuage the feelings of the industry on whose toes it had stepped. George M. Cohan was quoted as author of the statement: "Lucky is a marvelous pal—the toasted flavor overcomes a craving for foods which add weight." This, surely, should satisfy the candy manufacturers! But no. For years, the confectioners had been soft-pedaling the fact that candy is fattening. Another concession on the part of the tobaccoists was called for, and the following crept into one of the Lucky ads:

A reasonable proportion of sugar in the diet is recommended, but the authorities are overwhelming that too many fattening sweets are harmful and that too many such are eaten by the American people. So for moderation's sake we say: Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet.

By this time the fight was on in dead earnest. Officials representing some two dozen manufacturers and trade associations met to discuss ways and means of quashing this "fattening sweet" menace. A National Food Products Protective Committee was formed, and it was decided to launch a coöperative advertising campaign as soon as possible. An appeal was made to the Federal Radio Commission to put a stop to the "unfair propaganda" which, it was alleged, was being sent to innocent thousands of listeners through the Lucky Strike radio hour. The National Confectioners' Association had already swung its guns into position.

"Don't neglect your candy ration!" screamed one of its most recent ads. "Read how candy saves wear and tear on body tissues—how candy can help you to your proper weight!" This, advertising men agree, was about as ingenious a way of admitting that candy is fattening as could possibly be devised. A Dr. Herman Bundesen, it seems, has prepared a booklet setting forth the importance of candy as a food. The candy association urges everyone to send for this interesting and instructive little booklet and get at the facts.

But George W. Hill, president of the American Tobacco Company, had by this time girded his loins and was ready to wade in. He issued a manifesto declaring that he did not intend to give up his slogan, and sent a book on rational dietetics, by a doctor (presumably not Dr. Bundesen), to tobacco jobbers. *Printers' Ink* succeeded in picking the following characteristic paragraphs from its pages:

Sugar is undermining the nation's health. By this I mean cane sugar, beet sugar and, to a much less degree, maple sugar. The average American consumes daily a quarter pound of cane sugar. . . .

Sugar is very bad for children. . . . It not only

destroys a child's appetite, but takes the place of essential food elements in the diet. . . .

Pastries and puddings are in general detrimental to health. . . .

Compare these observations with the following from the candy industry's booklet:

This is what has been found to be true of candy by modern science: That it provides, in easily digestible form, the five essential elements. . . .

That without this element the whole body is disturbed in its functions. . . .

The body needs sugar. It is natural for one to crave sweets. For children, whose active little bodies make more movements in an hour than many grown-up ones do in a day, and who thus expend large quantities of energy daily, candy repairs the loss in a simple, quick and acceptable way.

The tobacco-candy fight will be a stiff one. The American Tobacco Company has appropriated \$12,300,000 to carry it on, and its opponents are also well financed. But, though prophecy is dangerous, I think I know what the solution will eventually be. I do not hold with those who think the fight will be mutually destructive, that they will finally eat each other up and leave nothing. I hold another view, the germ of which was contained in an Old Gold ad a little while ago. This ad, a model of discreet impartiality, said:

"Eat a Chocolate. Light an Old Gold. And enjoy both! Two fine and healthful treats!"

That, I submit, is a sample of real business vision.

PHILIP WAGNER.

"Time and Spirit"

Spirit going with me here,
If thou tellest time aright,
It's by some ancestral clock
Older than the golden sun
And his measure trod with night.

Rarely by my calendar
Bite or sup for thee is spread,
Yet thou comst not grace foregone,
As the jostling starvelings do,
But most mannerly art fed.

Half my store consumes to keep
This poor lamp which warmeth me;
Thou that takst no thought to live
In a delicate excess
Spendst more brightness than I see.

How should thou and I keep step?
Threescore ten was set my race
Of just distancing the worm;
But a lifetime for a sphere
Lends a more exalted pace.

LÉONIE ADAMS.

The Land of the Free: 1928

JANUARY

Colorado state police and militia suppress workers' meetings, search their homes without warrant, arrest and hold strike leaders incommunicado, and shoot down strikers while the courts uphold the suspension of habeas corpus.

Kentucky Court of Appeals affirms verdict of criminal libel against William Warley, Negro editor of the Louisville Leader, who wrote that a fair trial to two Negroes was impossible with a mob outside the court-house and militiamen escorting jurors to and from the premises.

Nineteen Yale students arrested by New Haven, Conn., police for distributing a pamphlet which covered all issues in the neckwear strike in that city.

FEBRUARY

Post Office Department rules that a small envelope sticker reading "Protest against Marine Rule in Nicaragua" is either indecent, lewd, lascivious, obscene, scurrilous, defamatory, threatening, or libelous, and thus unfit for mailing.

MARCH

Thirteen students at the University of Minnesota expelled for failure to attend regularly compulsory military drill.

APRIL

Eighteen-year-old David Gordon sentenced to three years in jail for writing a poem denouncing America, which was prosecuted on the ground of obscenity.

MAY

C. L. Smith, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, found guilty and fined \$100 for sending atheistic literature to Rev. John Roach Straton. The court of Special Sessions in New York held that Mr. Smith acted "with intent . . . to cause annoyance."

JUNE

Fall River, Mass., police chief refused Communist leaders of textile mills committee permission to hold a meeting on the ground that they were "radical reds" coming to "incite trouble."

Seattle, Wash., School Board passed a rule that all high-school teachers must sign a pledge not to join the American Federation of Teachers or agitate for increased wages.

JULY

July 30, 240 strikers arrested at New Bedford, Mass., for peaceful picketing in large numbers.

Sixteen opponents of Marine rule in Nicaragua arrested for making protests against imperialism before Wall Street crowd.

AUGUST

Publication of the Saturday Press of Minneapolis, Minn., forbidden by permanent injunction obtained by public official whom it had condemned.

SEPTEMBER

Pittsburgh, Pa., police and reactionary officials of the United Mine Workers smash convention of insurgent miners on September 9 and arrest 128 insurgents who were not assailants, but the assailed.

OCTOBER

New Bedford, Mass., police arrest twenty-seven left-wing textile strikers because they had "no visible means of support."

C. L. Smith, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, sentenced to twenty-six days in jail at Little Rock, Ark., for attacking the proposed anti-evolution law. He was denied the right to testify in his own behalf because he refused to take an oath on the Bible.

NOVEMBER

Twenty-six striking knitters of Kenosha, Wis., jailed for contempt of court when they refused to pay fines levied for defying federal injunction against picketing.

DECEMBER

A copy of "The Decameron" of Boccaccio, imported by Mr. T. M. Hatfield of St. John's College, Annapolis, Md., was seized by the federal authorities.

Newspaper correspondents, touring South America with President-elect Hoover, had all their despatches censored by Mr. George Barr Baker, a friend of Mr. Hoover's and a member of the party.

R. LOWOOD.

"At a Solemn Musick"

Flowers heavy in the sun
Held these tunes of honey spun;
Now woody throats, autumnal, sigh
That love's first ecstasy must die
Even as a plundered bloom,
Its nectar hoarded in the comb.
Here the harp, a trellis, bears
Upon a gold frame vinelike airs
Which fall too from a lifted flute,
Notes clustering like mellow fruit.

Oh, must my love, also a flower,
Be plundered in a cruel hour
For some rare mead? Why should this tone
Break like fruit for crushing grown
And spill itself in ruddy sound?
Was my love too for vintage found?

You are more—the wise reeds blow,
Pleading with choirs of string and bow—
Than flower of love, or fertile vine,
And sorrow less than half its wine;
For blossomed love owes honeyed gold,
And fruitful love two streams shall hold:
Bruised, it runs cloudy at the start,
Then endless fire from the deep heart.

JANET RAMSAY.

We Need Such Things

Serena Blandish, by S. N. Behrman, based on the novel of the same name, by a Lady of Quality. Morosco Theater, January 24, 1929.

NOW AND again this play at the Morosco wavers a little, the direction of the theme is not so certain as it might be, and the statement needs stiffening at points in order that motivations might be sharper and more telling. But this is largely due, perhaps, to the fact that "Serena Blandish" is another play based on a novel, where, contrasted with the theater, so many of the effects may lie in a mist of words and yet secure their ends, and where freedom and fantasy come easier, because the pressure of actuality is less than on the stage. In general this piece that Mr. Behrman—whose comedy, "The Second Man" gave such agreeable promise two seasons ago—has contrived, is good entertainment, not without poetry, and tintured with a brand of traditional English wit, the wit of those comedies—Congreve, Sheridan and the rest—where the dowager and adult world rules, and against them youth struggles, and romance wears a rebellious heart on its sleeve. On its sleeve, for the poignancy was never too sharp nor the lyricism too far from drawing-rooms. You follow "Serena Blandish" all through and are never bored, which in itself is high praise of late.

In the first scene we find Serena sitting with her lover, who is off to Egypt on the fortune that he has just inherited. He has never given her anything and gives her nothing now, even the bill he leaves for her to pay. He is gone, and in her embarrassment over the bill, which is more money than she ever saw, she discovers in Sigmund Traub a backer, as it were. Sitting at a near-by table he has heard the conversation, noted the young man's worthlessness and that Serena has never loved him. Sigmund Traub is the rich jeweler of Bond Street; he introduces himself, offers to pay the bill, decides to turn Serena Blandish into an adventure in social problems. He will lend her a ring, on which she is to see that other rings are bought, for jewels beget jewels on pretty ladies, if they are wise, and hard, and demanding enough. He will put her into the house of the Countess Flor de Folio, and give her a month in society, in which time she is to make a good match for herself and a good profit for him.

At this point in the play, when Serena returns to her mother's rooms, the tropical and fantastic countess appears, and the wind of her butler's reputation, the strange and subtle Martin, blows into the story. Serena is taken to the shops, fitted out as a fashionable young figure, and introduced into the countess' flamboyant house. Martin becomes her friend, and her romance appears in the form of the young man that the countess has on hand and intends to marry off to the rich princess whose arrival on her yacht is only delayed by the illness of her Pekinese. Lord Ivor Cream is the best catch in town, and Serena is set to win him, or Sir Everard Pyncheon, who is celebrating his hundredth birthday, or any other sound possibility. Everybody loves her easily, but there is nothing about her to force any of them to ask her hand in marriage. Serena goes to lunch with Lord Ivor Cream, she frankly wants to marry him, and he as frankly wants her

love with nothing attached but a present, and that incident ends like the rest—she gives her kindness and favors too simply to make men value them or trouble to marry her. This scene, by the way, is a good example of a place where the play needs pointing up; the course of this visit to my lord's rooms is not clearly portrayed; it remains none too clear, even as to what happened exactly; and the last five minutes before the curtain need several underscorings to clinch the needed facts.

In the last scenes the ring is shown to a poet on the bus and lost just as Serena is on her way to return it to Traub and confess her failure, and everything is reduced to glorious nothingness by Edgar's throwing his love at her feet. In the midst of the happiness and reckless excitement that this fills her with, Serena becomes so dazzling and so positive in her glamorous possibilities, that Traub himself proposes to her; he will make her the jewel of his house, and without any loving demands on his part, she may have Edgar too if she likes! Finally, in spite of Martin and all good sense, she throws herself away on the most worthless of her men, as we might know she would. She runs off with Edgar and a friend of his to start a night club at Monte Carlo; and even he does not mean to marry her, he is not the marrying kind.

"The Difficulty of Getting Married" is the subtitle of this play; and this is the side of it that carries along the comic appeal and that makes the social thrusts amusing and the satire often happy. It is this side of the play that involves the florid countess, the blasé lord, the centenarian and other social characters, with their absurdity and folly and their variety within their greedy world. But the other side of the play, which gives to it its prettiness and fantasy and its endearing fragrance, and lends it possibilities quite above the usual social comedy, is this gentle vagary and prodigal dreaming in Serena herself. In Miss Ruth Gordon's hands all this takes on its own reality and deepens to a genuine beauty, humor and charm. The comedy then becomes not so much a play about the difficulty of getting married as about the necessity of giving yourself, your kindness, your body. She gives for a while to these diverse men her gentleness, her docility, her company, but with that vague, unerring drive of poets she is moving toward her great necessity, which, in her case, is to give her love. This is quite a fresh version of the traditional theme of a woman's need for love. And, what is much more interesting, it is a new version of the poet's nature. Something so intangible this nature is, so unpractical in men's eyes and so practical in seeking what it really wants, so distinct in its own needs, so weak and so strong, that it exhausts people's patience even as it harries them into envy and drops a panic into their boredom.

Besides this remarkable performance of Miss Ruth Gordon's, we have Mr. Henry Daniel's capital Lord Ivor Cream, very witty and curiously distinguished; and Mr. A. E. Matthews, as Martin, the butler, the countess' and Traub's adviser, and secretly the father of Edgar the worthless, whom he at last abandons to his ways, plays with that well known quietness of his, the advantages of which are obvious, but misses sadly the rich content of the role. Miss Constance Collier, in my opinion, plays a great deal better in "Serena Blandish" than she did in last year's revival of "Our Betters." Her method is as broad

as possible, and the effects sometimes spaded on. But the whole impression of her Countess Flor de Folio is exhilarating and full of gusto, and flashes with the tradition, from Congreve's Lady Wishfort down through Sheridan to Oscar Wilde and the feebler efforts of our time. Miss Collier's chief defect at present derives from the fact that the tone and vocal pitch that her method cultivates lead her now and then into an indistinctness that blurs the lines. As for the high degree of exaggeration that Miss Collier gives the role, it is quite right; it pushes the character into fantasy, which balances that of another sort in which Serena moves.

This season has not provided any play at all that might employ to a passable fullness such a fine gift as Mr. Robert Edmond Jones brings to the theater. Of these settings that he has done for "Serena Blandish" I should say that if the drawing-room of the countess, of rather unsteady taste and design, is a dramatic characterization of the lady, it is excellent. If that is true, however, what becomes of those very sumptuous and elegant curtains in the room of the poor Mrs. Blandish? The difference between the two settings in this respect makes the designer's exact intention somewhat confusing. The scene in the red-lined limousine, with the fog hiding all but that bright space and the two occupants within it, and the scene on the bus, where we see the top with the passengers and then only the enveloping air, are marvels of blended light and direct presentation. Lord Cream's room is both very handsome and brilliantly descriptive of him. The two settings, the bus and the lord's drawing-room taken together, with the grotesque daily poetry of the mist, and the last finality of taste in the room, illustrate perfectly a kind of gay poetry and freedom from reality that this play has, and that our theater might oftener seek.

STARK YOUNG.

How Is This Vast World Garmented

How is this vast world garmented
As turn on turn it troubles space,

With shifting whiteness for its head
And lifting mountains on its face.

Fierce in its chasms is the rush
Of unleashed waters. Silence fills

Its secret veins with utter hush
Sweet in the marble hearts of hills.

Its gentle girdle is the land
That stretches taut with trees around

Its arched expanse: on either hand
It ceases at the water's sound.

Deep on its swaying ocean floor
Where gold sand and green water meet

Sea-blooms writhe upward to explore
Strange shapes that waver round its feet.

HELEN PEARCE.

On Not Knowing French

ONE scarcely dare say it, but it is true—nobody knows French but the French themselves. Every second Englishman reads French, and many speak it, and some write it, and there are a few who claim—and who shall deny them?—that it is the language of their dreams. But to know a language one must have forgotten it, and that is a stage that one cannot reach without having absorbed words unconsciously as a child. In reading a language that is not one's own, consciousness is awake, and keeps us aware of the surface glitter of the words; but it never suffers them to sink into that region of the mind where old habits and instincts roll them round and shape them a body rather different from their faces. Thus a foreigner with what is called a perfect command of English may write grammatical English and musical English—he will, indeed, like Henry James, often write a more elaborate English than the native—but never such unconscious English that we feel the past of the word in it, its associations, its attachments. There is an oddity in every page that Conrad wrote. Right in themselves, the words come together somehow incongruously.

Thus, though the number of French books read every year by English people is probably very large, their version of them, if submitted to the French critics, would often seem strangely out. In the same way, it is always amusing to see what takes the French taste in contemporary English literature, or to receive back from their critics some queer, a little lopsided version of English reputations, some brilliant but fantastic vision of English character. The extreme vivacity of M. Maurois' lives of Shelley and Disraeli rose in part from the novelty with which he endowed them. And this novelty was the more striking because there was perhaps a grain of truth that custom had overlaid.

It is novelty, and the strangeness, and the very fact that we are conscious and not unconscious that make the habit of reading French books so widely spread among the English; that make French literature so stimulating, so refreshing, so new to our minds. It is a delight, after mulling over the old stories of our old memoirs in the familiar English atmosphere of joints and butlers and port and Parliament and Queen Victoria on the throne, to flash instantly into the brilliance of Mérimée and the court of Napoleon and the Empress Eugénie. After trudging through muddy lanes and damp shrubberies we seem to tiptoe a little self-consciously upon polished floors under crystal chandeliers. And all our ramblings round and about this figure and that, as we pick our way through the ramifications of French memoirs, are full of surprises and excitements—of terrifying encounters with great ladies more severe than our own, of interviews with dukes and diplomats who seem (such is the prestige of the French) more pompous, more polite than our local nobility. Our ramblings lead us into *châteaux* that have much more than the formality of our country houses; into villages perched on hillsides with strange swift streams in the valleys and wild boar, or wolves perhaps, in the forests. The priest blesses the hounds. The hunt is different. The very foxes are different. The talk is of incredible distinc-

tion. With an awe that is absent from our visits to the court of Charles the Second under the guidance of Pepys, we find ourselves at Versailles waiting with the Duc de Saint Simon for the King to pass. It is a formidable civilization, more articulate, less homely than our own.

And if it is a delight to have a change of scene, it is also a delight to have a change of tongue. Habit has made English—the ordinary daily English of which most books are made—as colorless, as tasteless as water. French, even the French of daily use, has wine in it; it sparkles; it tingles; it has its savor. Here and there, in Saint Simon, for instance, a curious word, unknown and therefore uncolored by habit, emerges, so that we can feel it and see it apart from the text, and wonder for a moment what sort of meaning we shall fill it with when we have looked it up in the dictionary. The sentence, too, takes a different curve. The old swing of the wrist, going up and down the page sowing phrases as mechanically as a man sowing seed, is altered. It takes a spirited, unusual pace which makes us wake and attend. With all these advantages and a vocabulary of desirable words—how, for example, one longs to pilfer words like "*amertume*" and "*pierreries*," and there are a thousand others—the French, it would seem, can hardly fail to write better than the English.

That they do write better is an illusion perhaps, an illusion born of unfamiliarity and glamor, but it is an illusion that is always winning support. Take "*Climats*," for example, the new novel by M. Maurois. It would be difficult to find a fellow to it in English. One cannot bring to mind at the moment any living English writer so intelligent, so dexterous, so accomplished as M. Maurois. There are, it is true, a dozen with more of one quality—imagination, perhaps, or originality—but the one quality overpowers the rest, so that the result is unequal. We race through half a dozen chapters at top speed; then we yawn. But in "*Climats*" the balance is so even, one gift comes so pat to the help of another, that we are supported evenly and lightly from end to end. The predominating quality is, no doubt, intelligence. The book is a study of a man and his relations with two women. In the first part the man gives his own version of his character and his relations with his wife; in the next the mirror is held up at a different angle by his second wife, and the two pictures join with all the neatness of expert carpentry—there is Philippe before us in the round. Nor is it simply as a piece of craftsmanship that the book is admirable. Look into those two pictures and one will find, more particularly in the first, things noticed, perceptions seized, and so subtle a use of suggestion that the presence of the first wife permeates the second part and thus bridges what might, with the change of persons, have been a break in the continuity. But it is over the intelligence that the English reader will ponder, for it is perhaps the rarest quality in our own fiction. Intelligence is not easy to define. It is not brilliance; nor is it intellectual power; it is perhaps the sense that the interest of life does not lie in what people do, nor even in their relations to each other, but largely in the power to communicate with a third party, antagonistic, enigmatic, yet perhaps persuadable, which one may call life in general. That is what makes the people in "*Climats*" so reasonable. Isabelle's words express this relationship. "*Ce que j'ai compris de très important, de-*

puis un an, c'est que, si l'on aime vraiment, il ne faut pas attacher trop d'importance aux actions des êtres qu'on aime. Nous avons besoin d'eux; eux seuls nous font vivre dans une certaine 'atmosphère' (votre amie Hélène dit 'un climat' et c'est très juste) dont nous ne pouvons nous passer. Alors, pourvu que nous puissions les garder, les conserver, le reste, mon Dieu, qu'est-ce que cela peut faire? Cette vie est si courte, si difficile."

The French words, in their lucidity, in their intelligence, seem to break through our island mists and to lie before us serene in sunshine. Yet perhaps the quality which M. Maurois calls "*un idéalisme de Magazine Anglo-Saxon*" is too stubborn to be persuaded out of existence so easily. Human beings are not reasonable to this extent; nor so exacting, nor so clear-sighted.

"En apparence j'ai fait un métier. En fait, ma seule occupation a été de poursuivre un bonheur absolu que je croyais atteindre à travers les femmes et il n'y a pas de poursuite plus vaine." This conclusion, which is so aptly rounded by Philippe's death a few pages later, would have been disturbed, in nine out of ten English novels, by cheerfulness in some form or other breaking in—perhaps an idea, perhaps a sight—something, at any rate, that would have made a mess of the book and given scope for one or other of our English habits—the love of preaching, or the love of poetry.

But the word poetry reminds us of our precarious foothold in these parts. Just as one is secretly persuaded that no Frenchman, Russian, German, has the instinct for

English poetry in him—he can acquire everything but that—so confidence fails us when we try our wings in this particular form of flight. In reading poetry, it may be, one reads in phrases, running the words together, so that they must be malleable and flexible all through, whereas in prose each word is taken separately into the mind. The ear, too, collects a thousand hints and suggestions from one's own tongue which escape it in another. At any rate, in reading French prose even, it is curious how far out one finds one's self, looking for poetry where poetry is not, finding it absurdly where nothing of the sort was intended. It is enough for Odile to walk in Compiègne for the irrational belief to possess us that Compiègne is not like Richmond, reached by the electric train; it is a forest of infinite charm, in which flowers, earlier and more elegant than our homely violets and primroses, grow in clumps, like those in pictures. And then Odile has only to hold her gray fur to her throat to accentuate to our insular eyes the grace of the Latin, her elegance, her distinction. When we are thus susceptible, when influences and suggestions of this kind have such power over us, who can say how insidiously our critical sense may not be seduced and the object of criticism transformed? The French, we think, are wrong to attribute such importance to Byron and Poe. Our verdicts have been arrived at, perhaps, by the same misunderstandings, and are just as false. But none the less we take our stand on it—"*Climats*" is an admirable piece of fiction.

VIRGINIA WOOLF.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Alien Registration

SIR: Unknown to the general public, and even to many persons especially interested in immigration, the Senate on January 23 passed, with strange unanimity, an Alien Registration Bill introduced by Senator Cole Blease, which now comes before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization of the House.

About three years ago, when such bills were advocated and introduced in Congress, many eminent leaders of thought expressed in no uncertain terms their abhorrence at the introduction of methods of surveillance and espionage approaching old-time European passport systems; but since then, interest has undoubtedly been diverted to other social and economic questions, and meanwhile Secretary Davis has gone about the country defending and pleading for his pet scheme of registration and control. Intentionally or not, he has stirred up considerable suspicion against the immigrant elements, in various cities of the country.

Last June, the Commissioner of Immigration, with the written approval of Acting Secretary of Labor Husband, issued General Order No. 106, for the issuance of "Identification Cards" for newly arriving aliens. Secretary Davis then described the measure as one which might prove of some occasional benefit and do little harm. The Senate report which accompanies the Blease Bill asserts that large numbers of immigrants who came here before the Law of 1924 are clamoring for "Identification Cards," and that the new law is needed in order to authorize the issuance of such certificates. Mr. Davis offers as an inducement to residents of immigrant origin his belief that many large industrial plants will give preference to applicants for employment who possess such cards. Senator Hiram W. Johnson frankly admitted to a New York newspaper man that the Blease Bill for the voluntary registration of aliens will be employed for the purpose of passing

legislation requiring compulsory registration. Many well informed persons in Washington believe that this proposed law is intended as a forerunner to a passport system for aliens such as was so emphatically condemned not long ago.

The advocates of compulsory alien registration are definitely moving forward. What are the liberals and lovers of personal freedom doing?

New York City.

BERNARD G. RICHARDS.

Hughes vs. Hughes

SIR: Mr. Charles Evans Hughes enjoys an extraordinary prestige in America both as a lawyer and as a citizen. He has recently come out in a weighty call to the bar to clean house. Shortly before he made his much discussed speech on this subject he appeared before the Supreme Court as counsel for the Interborough Rapid Transit Company of New York City in the seven-cent fare case.

Now if Mr. Hughes were only a lawyer or only a lawyer and a former Secretary of State, it would have been his privilege under what passes for legal ethics to appear for this exceedingly unsocial corporation in behalf of a cause which will greatly limit public authority over what we rather humorously call "public" utilities.

But there is more to the story. Mr. Hughes was Governor of New York in 1907 when the Public Service Commission was first established. His words and deeds have been quoted on both sides in this case. The city and state especially have gone back to the events of his administration in support of their contention that the creation of the Public Service Commission was not intended to impair the city's contracts with the subway company. How much was made of this argument in the final appearance before the

court, I do not know. I assume that legal proprieties, at least, were observed. But as a layman it seems to me a very shocking thing that Mr. Hughes should have appeared in this sort of case. Does it not do more to lower standards both for lawyers and citizens than the more obvious offenses of lesser men who for smaller fees chase ambulances? What is Mr. Hughes' defense?

New York City. NORMAN THOMAS.

The Essence of the Monroe Doctrine

SIR: Will you allow the "foreign gentleman" who "came to our shores to give the inevitable series of lectures" a few comments on your article "The Monroe Doctrine's New Phase"?

And, to begin with, why "inevitable" lectures? They are quite "evitable," though you, sir, did me the signal honor of not "eviting" them. But I will let that pass if only because I wish to congratulate you on the admirable article which follows your opening remarks—with just one reservation, to use a word *à la mode*. Are you quite fair to the "foreign gentleman" in saying "As an opening gun he boldly declared that the Monroe Doctrine was a menace to world peace. Yet despite this conviction, he frankly confessed he did not know what the Monroe Doctrine was"? I fear you were not quite as fair as you meant to be. For my point, and in fact the point about the Monroe Doctrine which remains intact after you have dealt with the subject is that, good or bad, narrow or wide, Senate-interpreted or Hoover-clarified, *the Monroe Doctrine is an act of sovereignty of this country over the heads of twenty other nations*. That is the point which I wished to emphasize, and in so far as you do not deal with it in your article, you have not dealt quite fairly with "the foreign gentleman"—which I would have let pass—nor with the subject. Hence this letter.

New York City.

SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA.

America and a League Blockade

SIR: In several editorials you have urged forcefully that the solution of the differences between the United States and Great Britain with regard to naval programs really depends on agreeing as to the use which each country is to make of its navy. You have pointed out that when Britain demands a large number of 7,500-ton cruisers she envisages herself as enforcing a blockade—either on the recommendation of the League of Nations Council, or as a belligerent in a "private war."

You have also pointed out that when the United States demands 10,000-ton cruisers, we foresee a war in which we are neutral, insisting on the right to trade with belligerents, in spite of a naval blockade.

You have also suggested that while there are good reasons why we should be allowed to trade with a belligerent engaged in a "private war" with Great Britain, we ought not to complain if, after due consideration, the Council of the League of Nations should recommend a blockade against a nation which declines to refrain from taking warlike measures to settle a dispute; or if we are cordially urged to join in enforcing the blockade instead of trying to break it up.

If a belligerent country which is thus reprimanded by the Council of the League is also a signatory of the Kellogg pact, its belligerent acts deprive it of the "benefits" of the pact. This means that if we wish to join in a blockade, we can now do so without losing our neutral status, although prior to our ratification of the pact, it would have been impossible for us to retain our neutrality, and join in the blockade.

May I make this further suggestion? If it could be agreed that before the Council of the League of Nations decides to recommend an economic blockade, it should invite the United States (and perhaps also Russia) to act as members of the Council for the purpose of that one question, the blockade would not be recommended without the approval of the United States. The Council acts in such a case only by a unanimous vote, and if our representative did not approve of the blockade, there would be none. This procedure would be similar to that devised in connection with the election of the judges of the World Court.

If such an arrangement were made, it would remove British anxiety as to how the British Navy would carry out a League of Nations blockade. That problem has caused great concern to the British leaders. In exchange for this agreement on the part of the United States, Britain should be asked to agree that in a "private war" she should not expect us to submit to a "paper" blockade against a belligerent with whom we desire to trade.

This arrangement might provide a solution of Senator Borah's difficulties with regard to the freedom of the seas.

New York City.

H. MAURICE DARLING.

The London Times and Russian Education

SIR: In your issue of January 30 you publish, via the pen of Mr. Hamilton Fish Armstrong, a melancholy picture of education in the Soviet Union, taken from the London Times. It seems odd, to say the least, that Mr. Armstrong could accept, without any attempt at verification, statements appearing in a British newspaper which for the past eleven years has notoriously made a specialty of mendacities about the Soviet State.

The despatch of the London Times purports to quote from an article in *Izvestia* (Moscow) giving official estimates for education for the next financial year, "and a comparison of past and present estimates." It purports to quote *Izvestia* as stating editorially that "all standards" of educational work remain far behind pre-revolution standards.

On examination, the article in *Izvestia* (November 13) proves to be not an editorial, or even a general article on education, but a plea for larger budgetary appropriations for education signed by Mr. M. Eppstein, one of the higher educational officials of R. S. F. S. R. (Soviet Russia proper). The article relates only to R. S. F. S. R., one of the six constituent republics of the Soviet Union, not to the country as a whole.

Characteristically, the London Times not only makes Mr. Eppstein's special plea an editorial utterance of *Izvestia*, but by lifting sentences out of their context it gives them a grotesque implication. Even in these misplaced sentences it cannot resist slight mistranslations which completely distort the meaning.

The London Times quotes: "All standards of the educational front remain behind, and considerably behind, pre-revolutionary standards." In fact, in this sentence, Mr. Eppstein is discussing a statistical table, placed just above it, showing the expenditures for education per student in educational institutions of various grades, as per the budgets for 1927-28 and 1928-29. He points out the difficulty, under the present sums available for education, of providing both for the great extension of the system as compared with the pre-war system, and for "a maximal increase of the quality of our work." He adds: "Although noticeable progress is being made on the basic sectors of the cultural front, nevertheless it does not by a long shot correspond to the requirements." Then, still referring to the table of expenditures per student, he says: "In all norms of the cultural front we are still behind, and considerably behind, the pre-revolutionary level." In other words, Mr. Eppstein has concluded that under the great increase of educational facilities, present available funds for education afford an expenditure per student still below the pre-war level in schools of all grades. By tearing the sentence out of its context and by a slight mistranslation, the London Times makes the sentence a broad confession of cultural ineptitude.

Total appropriations for education in the Soviet Union are in fact far beyond the pre-war appropriations, though the tremendous increase in the number of students cared for, as well as the new branches of education inaugurated since the Revolution, spreads the appropriations thin. Last year there were nearly 50 percent more pupils in primary and secondary schools than in 1913, and 139 percent more students in trade and vocational schools. In addition, nearly 10 percent of the educational budget was devoted to the care of the homeless children, a heritage of the War, a similar sum to the support of poor students, and other large sums for such items as adult education, pre-school kindergartens, and village libraries, all unknown before the War.

In 1913 the total appropriations for education, federal and local, were 276,100,000 roubles. In the fiscal year of 1927-28 they were 860,000,000 roubles, or, in terms of 1913 values, 490,000,000 roubles. For the current fiscal year appropriations will be approximately 27 percent greater than in 1927-28.

It is part of Mr. Eppstein's job to shout lustily, at budget-making time, for higher appropriations for education. The cause is altogether worthy and Mr. Eppstein does his bit very well. Naturally he uses the arguments and figures best suited to his S. O. S. appeal. But, of course, his *ex-parte* statements hardly give an objective picture, and, after no little distortion by a hostile foreign newspaper, they hardly "make useful reading in connection with Professor Dewey's articles," as Mr. Hamilton Fish Armstrong suggests.

HAROLD KELLOCK,

Washington, D. C.

Soviet Union Information Bureau.

Learning—What For?

SIR: Mr. Meiklejohn's article on the purposes of higher education ("Who Should Go to College?") is pervaded by an indiscriminating abstractness which should not go unquestioned. We have his assurance that much might be done with the college youth under suitable conditions for stimulating and fostering a scholarly attitude—for building up a "zest and capacity" for learning.

Now, Mr. Meiklejohn does not make plain what he means by "learning" or "liberal study." He raises the question of definition himself, but does not stay for an answer. "Persons who study," he writes, "simply because they like it, may very well like to study things which under the circumstances are not really worth studying." What things *are* worth studying? This raises at once the fundamental issue of the purposes of scholarship.

Yet learning in itself is neither fruitful nor useful. It may lead to the arid intellectualism of the traditional classical philosopher; it may flower in the eclectic but enervated futilism of an Aldous Huxley. Learning, without objectives or social applications, may produce, and does frequently produce, a personality in which may co-exist, without fusion at any point, an unsocial idealism and an unideal practicality.

In order to justify itself, learning must somehow come to grips with the society which nurtures it. If the scholar is a specializing economist, it is not enough for him to understand the historical economic theories; in addition, he must advocate some program for economic control. Now, while no one will quarrel with Mr. Meiklejohn's general thesis regarding the need for developing scholarship, will everyone welcome the developed scholar, supposing he turns out a communist, or, in another field, an iconoclast like Mencken, or a playboy like Cabell, or an Upton Sinclair, or an Oliver Lodge? Is learning the simple and final good that Mr. Meiklejohn makes it seem to be?

Brooklyn, N. Y.

ALFRED T. VOGEL.

A School for International Studies

SIR: Many of your readers will doubtless be interested to learn of the Geneva School of International Studies, the sixth session of which will take place in Geneva next summer from July 8 to August 30. Developed originally six years ago at the request of a group of students interested in international relations, this school has steadily grown both in size and in influence. Today it is officially recognized by the League of Nations Committee on Intellectual Coöperation and is sponsored by many prominent Americans.

Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for students of all nationalities to come together in their summer vacations and learn about some of the outstanding problems of international relations. The political points of view of the various nations are thrown into relief and the underlying factors which determine these policies are examined. The School does not aim merely to present a collection of facts, but rather to arrive at an increased understanding of national differences by open discussion among students of various nationalities. The Director of the School is Professor

Alfred Zimmern, who was for many years a Fellow of New College, Oxford, and is at present Deputy-Director of the League of Nations International Institute of Intellectual Coöperation.

Among those who will lecture next summer are: Lord Robert Cecil, Professor Gilbert Murray, Professor André Siegfried (author of "America Comes of Age"), Dr. Christian Lange (Secretary of the Interparliamentary Union), and Mr. Lewis Mumford. I shall be glad to hear from any reader of the New Republic who desires further information. I may be addressed at the American Office of the Geneva School of International Studies, 218 Madison Avenue, New York City.

New York City.

BEATRICE PITNEY.

The Linguistic Barrier

SIR: The growing interdependence of races and nations, the numerous recent attempts to enlarge the sphere of coöperation between states, such as the economic and disarmament conferences and the activities of the League of Nations, and increasing internationalism in the arts and sciences, all serve to call attention to the seriousness of the social and intellectual segregation arising from the linguistic barrier which exists between different language groups. Remedies advocated for this condition, including the universal adoption of a common language, exchange professorships, and common consular services, seem unlikely to solve the problem.

An interesting proposal is set forth in an article, "The Linguistic Barrier in Literary Intercourse," in *Psyche*, October, 1928, by Seba Eldridge. Dr. Eldridge suggests that all the vital literature of general significance in every language spoken by cultivated peoples be rendered accessible to all by translations into other languages. All important contributions to literary and scientific interest, excepting those having a purely local significance, would be universalized by translations.

The chief difficulty in the way of this scheme would seem to be that of expense. Two possible methods of financing the enterprise are suggested: coöperative financing by the different governments participating, or voluntary support by private fortunes. It would be entirely feasible for the United States, Great Britain, and other English-speaking countries to set the project in motion by creating a fund for the translation of foreign works into English, in advance of the participation by other nations. The social gains resulting from the more adequate literary intercourse between language groups, the prevention of duplication in research, and the elevation of esthetic and scientific standards, would doubtless be out of all proportion to the cost.

The political and social consequences of the language barrier are so serious that any proposal for its reduction or elimination deserves sympathetic consideration.

Chicago, Ill.

CARROLL D. CLARK.

A Museum of Peace

SIR: The fact that I have not seen or read in the papers or periodicals any mention of any attempt having been made to start a movement toward the erection of a Museum of Peace prompts me to write to ask if such a Museum has not been considered. It occurs to me that the establishment of a Museum of Peace (similar to The Block Museum of Peace in Lucerne, Switzerland), located in Washington, D. C., or at one of our leading universities, dedicated to the exemplification and glorification of world peace, would be a most powerful influence for lasting peace among the nations of the world.

Long Branch, N. J.

W. EARL HOPPER.

If King George Had Been the Kaiser

SIR: Thank you for Mr. Binkley's article on the responsibility for the War. But does he, or do you, think that if King George of England had been in the Kaiser's place the War would have taken place?

CHARLES F. JOHNSON.

Hartford, Conn.

Citizen of the Union

George W. Cable: His Life and Letters, by his daughter, Lucy Leffingwell Cable Bikle. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 306 pages. \$3.50.

THE publication of George W. Cable's *Life and Letters* reminds us how completely this once popular novelist has passed into eclipse. Few people read Cable nowadays; and the critics never discuss him. Yet in the eighties and the nineties he was enormously read and admired both at home and abroad—and admired justly. The decline of Cable's reputation is, I believe, due mainly to the lack of interest on the part of the critics of the new generation in regard to the American literature of the generation which immediately preceded them. We are rediscovering Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, but we have not discovered John Jay Chapman; we leave Stephen Crane in the half-shadow, and Cable in shadow completely.

The prevalent notion of Cable today seems to be that he was a romantic novelist of a species now obsolete—that he dealt exclusively in the quaintness and picturesqueness, the sentiment and charm of a New Orleans long gone to decay. This idea seems, indeed, to some extent to have been shared by the public who read Cable, that public for whom intellect and taste were represented by Richard Watson Gilder. When Cable was presented with an honorary degree of Master of Arts by Yale, it was "with the desire of recognizing publicly the eminent success which you have achieved in embalming in literature a unique phase of American social life which is rapidly passing away." Yet Cable himself had no idea that he was engaged in embalming anything: he supposed himself to be dealing with the realities of contemporary life—and this was true.

The New Orleans of George Cable's time—and even the New Orleans of today—is a laboratory where certain essentially American problems may be studied, as it were, in peculiarly vivid colors. Louisiana, originally French, was transferred in 1762 to Spain, with the result of arousing extreme hostility between the French and Spanish inhabitants. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was transferred back from Spain to France, and by Napoleon sold to the United States, with the result of provoking further hostility between the original Latin Americans and the Anglo-Saxon Americans who had come in to take possession. At the same time, the mixture of the whites with the large Negro element of the population had resulted in a class of mulattos who constituted themselves a special problem. Thus, one found in New Orleans, in a concentrated field and in an intensified form, the conflict of European nationalities, as between the Spanish and the French; the conflict of the Latins and Anglo-Saxons, as between the Spanish and French, on the one hand, and the Americans, on the other; and the conflict of two totally different races, as between the Negroes and the whites. Add to this the sectional conflict of the whole American South with the North during the Civil War, a conflict felt so much more acutely and for a so much longer time after the War by the South than by the North. The whole problem of America was here, and no writer ever studied it more thoroughly or thought about it more intelligently than Cable did.

For Cable was essentially a sociologist. He was not in the least a dealer in lavender and old lace, but a political and sociological novelist of the type of which the extreme

example is a writer like Upton Sinclair. It would, however, be less misleading to liken Cable to Dickens or Charles Reade on their sociological side. Not that Cable was a mere pamphleteer: he had a real sense of beauty, but there was too much of the Puritan in him—his mother was a New Englander, and it was only comparatively late in life that Cable was able to make up his mind that the theater was not immoral—to allow him much to cultivate his sensibility. Though his books have their own sort of atmosphere, it is not the atmosphere of Cable's novels which is most successful. Compare a Louisianian description by Cable with a Louisianian description by Lafcadio Hearn. I do not mean, in the least, that Hearn is to be preferred, as a writer, to Cable, but merely that the sort of glamor which Hearn is good at evoking, the sort of colors that he handles so well, with Cable, although the materials are the same and equally lush, have a way of turning flat. Beneath the agreeable floridity of the Southerner, we catch a glimpse of William Wetmore Story and his statue of Cleopatra. And so, though Cable had a most remarkable, an almost unexcelled ear for human speech, he had a way of leaving it unattractive at the same time that he reported it accurately. Just as he was in the habit of amusing himself by transcribing the songs of the birds into musical notation, so he studied and reported the different varieties of Negro, French and Spanish Creole and Acadian dialect, both in English and French, with a scrupulosity which must be as valuable to the phonetician as it is forbidding to the ordinary reader. It must be admitted that this remorseless rendering of the minutiae of dialect pronunciation, to which considerable objection was taken even in the period of Cable's popularity, is one of the most formidable obstacles to reading him today.

Cable's own conception of his craft appears plainly in certain of the letters included in this biography. Of "The Grandissimes," he writes that the editors of *Scribner's Monthly*, in which it first appeared, did not know

that the work I should by and by send them was going to have any political character. But that was well-nigh inevitable. It was impossible that a novel written by me then should escape being a study of the fierce struggle going on around me, regarded in the light of that past history—those beginnings—which had so differentiated Louisiana civilization from the American scheme of public society. I meant to make "The Grandissimes" as truly a political work as it has ever been called. . . . My friends and kindred looked on with disapproval and dismay, and said all they could to restrain me. "Why wantonly offend thousands of your own people?" But I did not intend to offend. I wrote as near to truth and justice as I knew how, upon questions that I saw must be settled by calm debate and cannot be settled by force or silence.

"The Grandissimes" was the first full-length instalment of Cable's anatomy of Southern society. Almost at the same time, he was preparing what was acknowledged in the United States Census for 1880 as a masterly report on the social statistics of New Orleans; and it was this combination of what may perhaps be taken as a New England conscientiousness and passion for facts with a humanism quite alien to New England which left Louisiana, in Cable's writings, the most satisfactorily studied community in the United States. For Cable, who had never been to France, had read and spoken French all his life; and, a Presbyterian, had come to manhood in a Catholic community. He ap-

proached life with a kind of culture and a point of view unique among American novelists of his period.

There was incorporated in "The Grandissimes" a short story which Cable had never been able to sell to the magazines, and which had consequently not appeared in the popular "Old Creole Days." The reason for rejecting this manuscript given by George Parsons Lathrop, writing for William Dean Howells, then editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, was "the unmitigatedly distressful effect of the story." This was the "Story of Bras-Coupé," the adventures of an African king sold into slavery. When Bras-Coupé is brought to Louisiana, and taken into the fields, and he first comes to understand that it is intended for him to work with common Negroes, he hits the foreman over the head with the hoe, picks up one of the other slaves, bites him in the leg and throws him away, and raises havoc till the white overseer shoots him down. A female slave, who speaks his dialect, is brought to interpret to him, and he falls in love with her, and allows himself to be ruled through her. But he demands to marry her; and, on the night of his wedding, gets drunk, forgets that he is a slave, knocks down his master, who has resented being treated as king to king, and is brutally hunted to death. As a study of what man can make of man, of the deformation of human relations by unnatural social institutions, the story of Bras-Coupé makes "Uncle Tom's Cabin" look like a melodrama for children, and, together with the story of Mme. Lalauré and other such detached episodes, almost puts Cable in a class with the great Russian short story writers.

For it is not his love stories which interest Cable, but his social and political situations. It is life throttled in the web of society which arouses all his passion, at the same time that he can trace with nicety every individual strand, and show you the necessities which have strung it. One of the most interesting things in this biography is Cable's hitherto unpublished account of the evolution of his political ideas. Cable had fought in the Confederate Army, but had afterwards come to unorthodox conclusions in regard to the Negro question and the relations of the North and the South. About the time that he began to appear as a publicist, he moved his family from New Orleans to New England. The real occasion for this change was the ill health of Cable's wife; but there can be no doubt that, though he continued, as he said, to publish no opinion on Southern problems in the North which he had not previously made a point of declaring from the platform in the South, there can be no doubt that Louisiana had become a difficult place for Cable to live. He was one of the most intelligent Americans of his time, and in the South, after the Civil War, detached and realistic intelligence was uncommon and unwelcome. It was not common or welcome anywhere. Cable understood both South and North; the American and the European; the white man and the Negro; and he refused to become the partisan of any. What he believed in were democratic principles, as he understood the American Republic to have been intended to put them in practice; and he devoted all his thoughts and study to the attempt to impress their importance on a public occupied for the most part—during our period of industrial development after the Civil War—with very different considerations. The moral of Cable's stories is always that racial, national and social distinctions are to be regarded as only provisory, that there can never be a true equilibrium, but only agony and struggle, where men in these respects are kept unequal.

EDMUND WILSON.

Grant Made Understandable

Meet General Grant, by W. E. Woodward. New York: Horace Liveright. 512 pages. \$5.

READERS of Mr. Woodward's "George Washington" will recall that he wrote from a twentieth-century point of view, with a modern understanding of motives, with a certain smartness of manner, and that he did considerable debunking of American mythology. The same qualities characterize Mr. Woodward's latest opus. This time, however, he does his debunking in reverse. Having pictured the Father of His Country as a hard-boiled character, he now gives us a General Grant who is altogether too soft.

To most of us, I suppose, Grant has been one of the most puzzling characters in American history. How could the magnanimous victor of Appomattox have been the ruthless butcher of Cold Harbor? How could the soldier with the bulldog grip have been the vacillating victim of the jug? How could the hapless captain who drank himself out of the army have become the nation-saving commander-in-chief? Again, why did Grant, with his uncritical mentality and almost pathetic desire for respectability, evince no interest in religion and refuse to join the Church?

Mr. Woodward has made Grant understandable. The clue to many of the man's inconsistencies and deficiencies he finds (in Freudian fashion) in the circumstances of Grant's boyhood. Hard and solitary manual labor—he was doing a man's work at fourteen—forced the shy, sensitive, undersized lad into a precocious physical maturity, while mentally he remained for most of his life in a sort of congealed adolescence. This goes far to explain Grant's prudishness, his sensitiveness to ridicule, his unsociability, his poor judgment of human nature. When confronted by circumstances that called for physical action Grant seemed sure of himself and was usually successful, but when dealing with imponderables he fumbled and often blundered egregiously.

Mr. Woodward believes that great men are largely the product of circumstances, and never has such a belief been more strikingly supported than in the case of Grant. There was nothing about him as a youth to indicate that he might be destined even to a footnote in history. He got his chance for West Point through a lucky accident. So distasteful to him was the idea of a military life that his father had to compel him to accept the appointment. As a cadet, he was distinguished by carelessness of appearance, mediocrity of scholarship, hatred of firearms, and a sort of girlish aversion to profanity and practical jokes. He fought in the Mexican War, which he regarded as grossly unjust, solely because he lacked the moral courage to resign. He began to drink in Mexico, probably because of sexual repression and profound aversion to military life. He literally drank himself out of the army. Figuratively, however, he drank himself into the job of commander-in-chief. For had it not been for whiskey, Grant would have remained in the service and would probably never have had the chance to command more than a regiment. As it was, the regular army was stupidly kept together at the outbreak of the Civil War, the states were expected to train and equip their own volunteers as best they could, everybody with military experience was in demand, a Congressman wanted a brigadier general from his district—and so Grant got his chance. His success was, in part, due his very limitations—he had never read a book on strategy

and so never bothered about what Napoleon would have done, but went right ahead, using his common sense. His mind was naturally that of an engineer—he was at his best in dealing with the movement of men and supplies. His greatest victory, Vicksburg, was largely an affair of transportation. As a President, Grant was, of course, a pathetic failure, and as a banker, an egregious victim of his own gullibility.

Barring two or three minor errors, Mr. Woodward's book is a sound and, I believe, an enduring piece of work. Aside from its main theme, it contains much pungent comment on nineteenth-century American civilization.

CHARLES LEE SNIDER.

Crab-Apple Juice

American Press Opinion: Washington to Coolidge, by Allan Nevins. New York: D. C. Heath and Company. 598 pages. \$5.

The Diary of John Quincy Adams, edited by Allan Nevins. New York: Longmans Green and Company. 585 pages. \$5.

BESIDES doing first-rate constructive work on his own account in American history, Mr. Allan Nevins renders valuable collateral services to his chosen discipline by issuing important collections of original materials. Not long ago he brought out a volume of extracts from the writings of British travelers based on their observations in the United States—a volume which ought to be prescribed for those facile journalists and literary critics who arrange words on American and British cultural relations. Now he has published a handy bundle of excerpts from newspapers and periodicals illustrating American public opinion on lively themes from 1786 to 1927 inclusive. Through these pages walk the great journalists and politicians, cheered on the one side and hooted on the other. Here are American ideas on most things under the historical sun, from law, corruption, and slander, to woman suffrage, prize fights, and the righteousness which was Theodore Roosevelt. The extracts are brief, well ordered, and served with plenty of salt, pepper, and vinegar. "The doctrine of hell is undergoing change," explains the Portland Oregonian in 1879. "The electric light, telephone, and telegraph wires have added new music to our city," burbles the New Orleans Times-Democrat, in 1884.

This general survey Mr. Nevins has supplemented by a compact volume giving a condensation of John Quincy Adams' voluminous diary covering the momentous years from 1794 to 1845. Here is the heart and gist of that weighty matter, selected by a competent hand and made available to thousands who never saw or heard of the majestic original. Here too are fat plums, well balanced by the proper proportion of suet. Nothing essential seems missing in letter and spirit; not even Adams' lament when Harvard gave Andrew Jackson an honorary degree, conferred "her highest literary honors upon a barbarian who could not write a sentence of grammar and hardly could spell his own name." A noble old Roman was John Quincy Adams, with all his crotchety weaknesses, an intelligent and honorable servant of this republic, a scholar, a lover of letters, an imaginative thinker. Shades of Heflin, Bryan, Fall, Daugherty, and Coolidge! It will be an experience next summer to sit in an old New England graveyard, under dark firs surrounded by moss-covered stones, and sip Mr. Nevins' distillation of crab-apple juice.

CHARLES A. BEARD.

Syrian Nationalism

The Nationalist Crusade in Syria, by Elizabeth P. MacCallum. New York: The Foreign Policy Association. 299 pages. \$2.50.

RECENTLY M. Poincaré described French policy in Syria as an example of "magnificent disinterestedness." If this were so, it would be as it should be—for (according to the sacrosanct Treaty of Versailles) France is in Syria to execute a "sacred trust of civilization," and a trustee is presumed to be above even the suspicion of self-interest. Miss MacCallum's dispassionate account of the conflict between Syrian nationalism and French imperialism discloses little which is either magnificent or disinterested on the part of the French Republic. Syria has been treated until very recently as a French colony, in violation of every pledge made by French statesmen during and since the War. Judged solely by the Syrian experiment, the Class A mandates would thus far be classed a tragic failure. Miss MacCallum's chapter, "The Fruits of Rebellion," indicates that recent concessions made by the French were the result of a warm respect won by the gallant resistance of a normally peaceful Syrian nation to the intricate and terrible mechanism of a modern military machine.

Miss MacCallum's analysis of the "roots of rebellion" is excellent. Syrian nationalism antedated the French occupation. But blunders in French policy as early as 1920 precipitated a series of armed insurrections, and rebellion brought forth "pacification" with its atrocities: arbitrary imprisonment and wholesale deportations of Syrian leaders; arming of Christian against Moslem; maintenance of an army of native spies and *agents provocateurs*; employment of undisciplined troops (such as Armenians, Circassians, and Senegalese) and of disciplined mercenaries (such as the Foreign Legion); arrest of Druse chieftains while they were enjoying the hospitality of the High Commissioner; forced levies of money and munitions upon helpless villagers accused of "harboring" rebels; indiscriminate bombing, looting, and burning of whole villages; destruction of crops, laying waste the countryside, and rendering homeless a hundred thousand innocent persons. The high point of all this was the bombardment and partial destruction in 1925 of the city of Damascus—one of the most outrageous pieces of vandalism in modern times, not excepting the depredations of the German armies in Belgium and northern France. Meanwhile, French economic policies were causing serious distress, and there were instances of palpable corruption on the part of certain French officials.

It should not be understood, however, that Miss MacCallum has drawn an indictment of the French administration. On the contrary, her book is written with the utmost detachment. It is critical of the League of Nations and of Syrian nationalists, as well as of French imperialists, although all concerned are treated with genuine sympathy. Only the Permanent Mandates Commission is handled with kid gloves. No one could demand greater objectivity, and certainly no Frenchman, Syrian, or protagonist of the League will complain that his case is not set forth honestly and completely. To be sure, there will be some differences of opinion concerning perspective and proportion, omissions and inclusions, the value of some of the evidence (such as the statements of M. Robert de Caix, French apologist extraordinary at Geneva and Rome), and like matters of personal judgment. But these will in no wise

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EDWARD MEAD EARLE.

Sonnets to Craig

Sonnets to Craig, by George Sterling, with an introduction by Upton Sinclair. New York: A. and C. Boni. 120 pages. \$2.

UPTON SINCLAIR, introducing "Sonnets to Craig," writes of a "metal box which rests now upon the writer's desk. It holds letters and sonnets written many years ago to the woman who is now his wife, by the man who was then, and remained to the end, his dearest friend." George Sterling was that man. The sonnets were written in 1911 when he met Mary Craig Kimbrough, who later became Mrs. Upton Sinclair.

That they were written many years ago and under such circumstances might be inferred from the sonnets; their extravagance in word and image seems to us, bred in a harder age, faintly ridiculous. They have genuineness, however, and whether we—who would have it expressed differently—or the sonnets are at fault is a question only subsequent ages can answer. "Striving in untranslated pain," a phrase from one, indicates the weakness and strength of them all. The strife and pain are irrefutably there, but they remain quite untranslated.

Though we no longer plead for "emotion recollected in tranquillity," here the writing of the sonnets is so obviously contemporary with the emotion producing them that the results are too frequently florid; their intensity staggers beneath verbiage and is lost. The sonnet form demands a discipline which these do not possess.

Whatever faults they have, however, barrenness and lack of poetic substance are not of them. Their stuff is emotion which, at least, does not stoop to intellectual camouflage, but which does not rise—due to muddled, diffused expression—to great heights.

ELLING AANNSTAD.

Novels in Translation

The Case of Sergeant Grischka, by Arnold Zweig. Translated from the German by Eric Sutton. New York: The Viking Press. \$2.50.

Ashes, by Stefan Zeromski. Translated from the Polish by Helen Stankiewics Zand. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Two vols. \$6.

Ida Brandt, by Herman Bang. Translated from the Danish by Arthur G. Chater. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

Mother Mary, by Heinrich Mann. Translated by Whittaker Chambers. New York: Simon and Schuster. \$2.50.

The Wanderer, by Alain-Fournier. Translated from the French by Françoise Delisle. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.50.

SERGEANT GRISCHKA" is one of the best novels of the War that has yet appeared. It is not written at white heat, like von Unruh's "Way of Sacrifice"; the War is not even its subject, but merely its scene. Its people

are neither stupefied puppets nor desperate animals, but common human beings who are being kept by a disagreeable job from going home. There are no heroes in this story, and very few villains: the central figure is Sergeant Grischa, a Russian prisoner of war. As the book opens, we see him planning his escape from a prison-camp far behind the Eastern Front. He gets free, wanders for some weeks in the forest, is befriended by brigands, and is captured again. Then begin the long, involved legalities and counter-legalities of the military circumlocution office which eventually decide his fate, and which form the plot of the story—a plot whose suspense becomes finally almost sickening, though we feel its inexorably approaching conclusion is inevitable as death.

The central scene of "Ashes" is Poland, in the last few years of the eighteenth century, when the shadow of Napoleon was beginning to loom over the horizon of Europe. As we follow the fortunes of Raphael Olbromski and his friend Christopher Cedro, the forests and mountains and countryside of Poland pass in a rich panorama: Sandomierz, Cracow, Warsaw—and as this frontier of Europe comes gradually within the field of the Napoleonic vision, the picture broadens to include France, Italy and Spain.

In an historical novel of such scope as this, the natural tendency would be to subordinate the characters of the story to the figures and events of history, but the author has generally avoided this temptation. Napoleon himself we see only twice, and we hear only the mutter of his far-away battles. The two friends, caught into the maelstrom of the war, are separated by the length of Europe: Raphael joins the French army in the Polish campaign, and Christopher goes to Spain, to the Peninsular War. The description of the storming of Saragossa is perhaps the most vivid in this long pageant of vivid pictures. Raphael's tragic love-affair is an episode in itself, not really organic to the main narrative, which throughout is written in a major and masculine key, culminating like a single trumpet note in the meeting of the two friends, after years of soldiering, only to hurry off together to join their emperor in his last and greatest war.

Zeromski is well known and admired in his native Poland; and this translation should go far to establish his reputation in America. Let us hope that no one will be dismayed by the formidable length of his book: this reader, for one, could have wished it longer—as indeed it was in the original, by an entire volume.

"Ida Brandt," first published in Copenhagen as far back as 1896, shows its age less than it might, perhaps because it has been translated into the modern idiom. But it is the kind of realistic novel that has already come to seem a little old-fashioned. Ida Brandt is the daughter of an overseer on a country estate, and at the death of her parents comes to town and becomes a trained nurse in a hospital. The family who own the estate have also fallen on evil days, and the worthless son takes a job in the office of the same hospital. Ida, of course, falls in love with him, and the rest follows according to rule. Some of the domestic scenes are lively, and it is especially the feminine passages-at-arms that redeem the book from dullness. Mrs. Gersdorff, writing to her sister, says: "In the French lectures we have got as far as Chateaubriand. It is very interesting, but he had a turbulent mind." Everything that happens in this story is on the cards, but the cards have been well thumbed, and shuffled many times.

"Mother Mary," by an elder brother of Thomas

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—Witt Bowden, in *Philadelphia Record*

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14th St., East of Union Square Telephone Stuyvesant 0523
Every Friday Eve. and Saturday & Sunday, Matinee and Evening

Maurice Schwartz, Dir., Announces

SHAKESPEARE'S

OTHELLO

Staged by the Eminent Russian Dir. BORIS GLAGOLIN
English Synopsis Supplied

EXHIBITION

EXHIBITION OF WOOD ENGRAVINGS

by

CLARE LEIGHTON

FEBRUARY 4th to 16th

The Art Center, 65 East 56th Street

Shown by the New Republic

Mann, will not increase the reputation of the Mann family. It is a wild fantasia of post-war life in Berlin, a society in which no one trusts anybody else, everybody fleeces everybody else, and anyone is apt to become hysterical at any moment, because everyone has forgotten how to laugh. Mother Mary is a demi-mondaine who has made her pile and retired, and now wants to get back her illegitimate son, a *gigolo* shattered from the War, who has been adopted by an aristocratic couple. The *gigolo* is in love with an impoverished princess, who, because she is senseless, is supposed to be pathetic. The whole thing resembles nothing so much as a marionette show in which even the man who pulls the strings is a little dotty.

Now and again—it is not often—a book appears which has about it a quality of magic. "The Golden Age" and "Green Mansions" are examples. They are fairy stories in the truest sense. And though their people are ghosts, and we do not believe in them, they speak with authority to whatever of our childhood still remains in our educated bosoms, so that to read them is both a pain and a delight. "The Wanderer" is of that small company. Though it has been sympathetically translated, it must have lost something of its magical atmosphere in the process. It comes dangerously near the life of common day at times, and at others trails more than a suggestion of the dark romantic gloom which covers "Wuthering Heights." But on the whole it must be admitted to that jealously guarded land of the fairy tale for grown-ups: and where is the blackguard who will criticize it?

T. S. MATTHEWS.

Contributors

GERTRUDE MATHEWS SHELBY is an expert on coöperative credit. She is the author of "Treason," "How to Face Peace," and, with James T. Dubois, of "Galusha A. Grow."

LINCOLN FITZELL is a Californian poet who has just returned to this country after living in Europe.

ALFRED L. BERNHEIM is on the staff of the Labor Bureau, Inc., and is now preparing an economic history of the theater for the Actors' Equity Association.

PHILIP WAGNER lives in Schenectady, N. Y., "far," as he says, "from the haunts of advertising men."

LÉONIE ADAMS, formerly an editor of Measure, is the author of a book of verse, "Those Not Elect."

JANET RAMSAY is a novelist and a musician. Her most recent novel is entitled "Highroad."

HELEN PEARCE is a contributor of reviews and of verse to various periodicals.

VIRGINIA WOOLF, English novelist and critic, is the author of "To the Lighthouse," "The Voyage Out," "Mrs. Dalloway," and other works. Her most recent book, "Orlando," was published in the fall.

CHARLES LEE SNIDER is a free-lance critic.

CHARLES A. BEARD is the author of "American Government and Politics," "The Economic Basis of Politics," and of many other books.

EDWARD MEAD EARLE is associate professor of History at Columbia University and the author of "Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Bagdad Railway."

ELLING AANNSTAD is on the editorial staff of W. W. Norton and Company.